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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Rare opportunity for those in Children's Ministry	2
Academy Day of Learning	5
New program begins for Clergy Counseling	7
Highlights from higher education	11
February Bible Study	12

Recession-Proof Generosity

Global and local church focus on missions despite hard times

When the stock market takes a hit, so do church collection plates.

Global economic woes had an impact on all levels of The United Methodist Church in 2009 and the results were budget cuts, staff layoffs, canceled meetings, pay cuts and postponed projects.

But the denomination as a whole and churches within the NC Conference continued to pursue its four areas of focus—improving global health, engaging in ministry with the poor, encouraging church growth and developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

The recession that began in the fall of 2008 translated into lean times for church bodies the following year.

Despite their own decline in finances, United Methodists reached out to others hurt by the economic crisis, joining rallies for victims of foreclosure, helping job seekers with resume preparation and networking opportunities and keeping food pantry programs stocked for an expanding client list.



Tori Hypes

Stockpile of socks seen in Swansboro

In coordination with Swansboro Middle School, 8th grader Tori Hypes asked her church, Swansboro UMC, to gather new socks to send to a non-profit in Ohio called "Hannah's Socks." Tori collected over 400 pairs of socks. Hannah's Socks (www.HannahsSocks.org) provides clothing necessities to the less fortunate. The program collects donated men's, women's and children's socks, then partners with local shelters for distribution to both the homeless and to victims of domestic violence. In addition, they support programs serving under-privileged children.

Centenary rises to the challenge

"When times are hard, Centenarians work harder," says the Rev. Susan Pate-Greenwood, senior pastor at Centenary UMC in New Bern.

One of the long-standing traditions of Centenary UMC is the provision of toys, clothes and food for families registered for assistance through the Craven County Department of Social Services or other agencies serving low-income families.

What about this year, when some members of the congregation have experienced unemployment or the loss of retirement income? What about this year, when many churches are struggling to meet their own budgets? Will they still serve others this year?

See "Centenary UMC," page 10



Margo Gifford (right) stands with her oncologist, Dr. Arati V. Rao at the Durham Veteran's Administration hospital. In front of them are some of the tote bags Gifford has created for female veterans fighting cancer. Rao said the patients light up when they see the tote bags. They are even more appreciative when they realize the bags come from a fellow veteran offering her support.

Bag ministry supports female veterans battling cancer

By Benjamine C. Deck *

A person battling cancer faces an array of challenges – fatigue, surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy just to name a few – but even loneliness and isolation can be deadly.

And where there is a need, there is a mission opportunity – an opportunity for churches throughout the NC Conference.

There are female veterans in every city and town, and oftentimes those women "fall through the cracks" in a culture where the predominant image of the veteran is of a male, said Margo Gifford, a U.S. Navy veteran, cancer survivor and member of First UMC in Washington.

"Women across the Conference need to understand that we have local women veterans," Gifford said.

See "Ministry supports women veterans," page 10

Garber shows faith in action

A Faith in Action vision clinic was held this fall at Morris Hall in the Ministry Center of Garber UMC in New Bern. The clinic was sponsored by the church and Vision Service Plan (VSP).

Local eye doctors conducted full vision exams in seven lanes of mobile vision examination equipment provided by VSP. In addition, VSP provided vouchers for glasses to people who financially qualified and had no vision insurance. The clinic also offered free blood pressure checks and free blood sugar checks. Medical supplies were provided by Carolina Diabetic Supply and Realo Discount Drugs of New Bern.

See "Garber UMC," page 10

Formalized partnership marks new era for MERCI

The MERCI Board affirmed the proposal of Banded Brothers for their management plan and partnership with the NC Conference.

As the Banded Brothers, a non-profit charitable organization made up of men from Wake County, assume leadership and oversight of MERCI, they are implementing a plan that has been developed over recent months, and calls for the transfer of responsibility to a new Board of Advisors.

The new board "will help to guide the work of the partnership and serve as a planning team for the ministry development," according to the proposal.

The former MERCI board was disbanded and the new board will meet monthly for the first quarter of 2010, at least, and on a quarterly basis after that.

The Banded Brothers envision a strong base of volunteer support for the ministry of disaster relief and home repair, as well as, other mission efforts. Disaster Response continues to be the primary role of MERCI, and the volunteers are preparing for a disaster by assessing equipment needs and receiving training for the coordination of resources.

All projects that were under commitment prior to the involvement of Banded Brothers will be completed with volunteer labor and existing funding. Banded Brothers intends to research all programs and new ideas for missions to ensure "they are aligned with the mission and vision of the NC Conference, they serve to

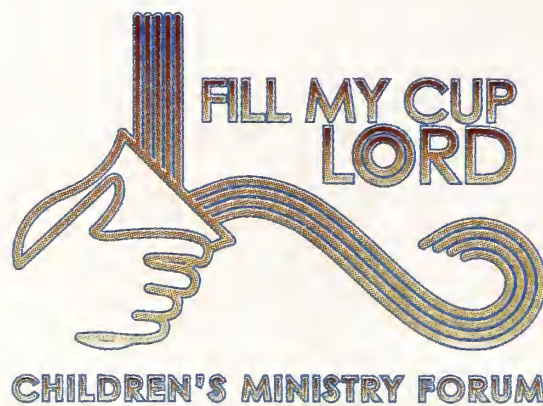
equip local churches in their ministries, and they are programmatically and financially viable programs. Viable programs and opportunities will be considered through board study and prayer."

While the NC Conference will continue to own the facilities in Goldsboro, the Banded Brothers will lease the warehouses and office space through a lease agreement with the NCC Board of Trustees beginning Jan. 1, 2010. Property and liability insurance will be attained by Banded Brothers.

As part of the ongoing operation of MERCI as a mission center for the Conference, Banded Brothers envisions partnerships with other agencies. Military Missions in Action (MMIA), for example, is a 501c3 organization serving injured men and women of the Armed Forces. MMIA in a partnership with MERCI may provide services, such as, home modifications to accommodate a veteran's disability and to allow independent living for the veteran.

The current director of operations for Banded Brothers and MERCI is Charlie Gray. He also offers a partnership for the benefit of local churches that provide transportation for groups via a bus or van. Training is offered for persons seeking a commercial driver's license, which the State requires for vehicles transporting more than 16 passengers.

The hours at MERCI are Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. To volunteer or schedule a visit, please call 888-440-9167.



February 23-25, 2010 • Edenton Street UMC • Downtown Raleigh, NC

Rare opportunity for those in children's ministry

Anyone involved in ministry with children will benefit from attending the Children's Ministry Forum to be held at Edenton Street UMC in downtown Raleigh from Feb. 23-25.

The Children's Ministry Forum will include keynote addresses and special worship services led by potter and Christian educator-Cely Chicerul, Biblical storyteller Dr. Tracy Radosevic from Baltimore, Md.; the Rev. Vance Ross and Mary Alice Gran from the General Board of Discipleship staff; Bishop Al Gwinn and the Rev. Ned Hill.

Workshops on a variety of topics will be offered by experienced children's ministry leaders and innovators from across the United States.

"It is a very rare and extraordinary opportunity to host a national denominational event in the North Carolina Conference. Leaders involved with children's ministry in eastern North Carolina will not have another opportunity of this caliber so close by ever again," said Sue Ellen Nicholson, conference director of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

"The event is filled with opportunities for learning, growing, inspiration, renewal and sharing with others."

The Rev. Bob Pierson, a retired United Methodist elder now working with Leadership Nexus and the Large Church Initiative, has served on the Children's Ministry Forum Planning Team for several events and urges pastors of churches to be part of the Children's Ministry Forum to be better equipped for ministry among a new generation.

The theme for Forum 2010 is "Fill My Cup, Lord." The image of pottery will shape participants as they empty themselves to be filled by God's love and grace, give themselves to God despite cracks and chips, and pour out God's love to others.

Event experiences include innovative workshops, soul-refreshing worship, networking opportunities, fellowship and sharing with others involved in various aspects of children's ministries, a Cokesbury store and resource display area. Participants may register for the full event or one day options. Continuing education units are also available.

The forum is an annual gathering of leaders in local church children's ministry sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship and the Large Church Initiative.

While Children's Ministry Forum is co-sponsored by the Large Church Initiative and much of the content will be most applicable for medium to larger church settings (average worship attendance of 350 or more), there will be great value, information, inspiration and application to ministry for churches of all sizes.

Because this is the first national denominational event the NC Conference has hosted, local participation is most important, highly sought after and deeply valued.

A schedule for the event, listing of workshops, registration and other information is available at the website: www.gbod.org/cmfi. The regular registration deadline is Jan. 31.



Announcing North Carolina Wesleyan College's
New Academic Seminar Series

Wesleyan Windows on the World

Enjoy lifelong learning at this enriching lecture and discussion led by six of the region's most outstanding college and university faculty. A list of suggested pre-readings, information about the faculty, the schedule, and further details can be found at www.ncwc.edu/windows. The schedule also includes viewing the film *Citizen Kane*. This inaugural seminar is entitled:

"What is the Good Life? Searching for Success: from Plato to Prozac"

Friday, January 22, 3:00 – 9:30 p.m. – dinner included

& Saturday, January 23, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – brown bag lunch optional

All events will be held at NC Wesleyan's Dunn Center for the Performing Arts

Online Registration: \$95, including dinner

Inaugural Seminar Leaders: NC Wesleyan — Dr. Festus Cole, History; Dr. Erica Kosal, Biology; Dr. Jeffrey Perry, English; Dr. Jonathan Sarris, History; Dr. Lee Templeton II, English. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill — Dr. Lloyd Kramer, Dean Smith Distinguished Term Professor and Chairman of the Department of History.

Seating is limited. Register early at www.ncwc.edu/windows.



RBC Bank

Sponsored by RBC Bank

Support from NC Wesleyan Office of Community Engagement

Year in Review: The United Methodist Church 2009

By Linda Bloom *

The year 2009 was marked by the economic downturn and its many impacts. The year also brought a renewed emphasis on encouraging young clergy and full communion with the Lutheran church

Financial challenges

While the denomination continued to pursue its four areas of focus—improving global health, engaging in ministry with the poor, encouraging church growth and developing principled Christian leaders for the church

and the world, 2009 marked a year of financial challenges.

"The reality across the connection is that budgets have been realigned, expenses curtailed or eliminated, and lives impacted because of the decrease in monies received and a projection of a recovery," said A. Moses Rathen Kumar, treasurer of The United Methodist Church and head of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

The economic crisis affected church programs around the world. In September, Africa University in Zimbabwe opened the 2009-10 school year

with its lowest enrollment in more than a decade—865 students instead of the expected 1,200 students.

More than 300 students were unable to register. "I have had mothers come to my office with their children trying to find a way to help their children continue their education," said Vice Chancellor Fanuel Tagwira. "They break down crying."

For about 60 of those students, however, there was a "saving grace." Grace Muradzikwa, a successful executive in Zimbabwe, raised \$100,000 for scholarships from the business community there.

in the pews and the pulpit.

"It is critical to the survival of the denomination to lower the age of United Methodist Christians by a decade in a decade," Bishop Larry Goodpaster said about a Council of Bishops' plan to emphasize mission work and leadership development among young people. The average age of United Methodists in the pews is 57, he said.

The need to recruit younger clergy is critical, research shows. The number of people under 35 ordained or on the track to be ordained dropped from 3,210 in 1985 to 910 in 2008, according to a study by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership. The average age of elders is 52; for ordained deacons it is 51.

Young clergy have established their own Web site, www.umcyoungclergy.com, and have created campaigns such as "40 Days of Prayer" and "6 Questions for The United Methodist Church."

In communion with others

On Aug. 20, the largest Lutheran body in the United States entered

See "2009 in review," page 4

Next Unity Dialogue is Feb. 19

The next gathering of the Unity Dialogue will occur on Friday, Feb. 19, from 5-7 p.m. Avent Ferry UMC in Raleigh is hosting the dialogue at the church on Avent Ferry Road.

The Unity Dialogue is an open table for discussion about homosexuality, a topic that affects millions who live as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgendered persons, and their families, and the church that struggles to discern God's voice amid the voices of scripture.

For over 10 years, the Unity Dialogue met as an appointed group, to worship and to discuss this highly sensitive issue. A year ago, the Unity Dialogue moved out of the conference room and into public spaces, inviting all interested persons to join the dialogue. Bishop Al Gwinn will facilitate the discussion.

Participants are asked to enter into holy conferencing, observing the tradition of the Christian community that seeks to understand first and then to be understood, to listen and then to speak, to offer the wisdom of spiritual insight rather than rushing to judgment.

SPSARV equips congregations to respond to alcoholism and other drug addictions

As millions of individuals and families struggle worldwide with alcoholism and other drug addictions, a denomination-wide initiative works to raise awareness and equip church leaders to effectively respond to alcohol, chemical abuse and dependency and its related violence.

The Charlotte-based Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence, known as SPSARV, is a general church initiative that prepares clergy, lay leaders and church professionals to be informed and compassionate responders to the needs of individuals and families impacted by the disease of addiction.

To accomplish this, SPSARV provides resources across the connectional system to congregations, districts, conferences, institutions and ecumenical partners to diminish the stigma associated with the disease of addiction; foster ministry responses of prevention, interven-

tion, treatment, recovery, and/or public policy; nurture networks of committed United Methodists who provide peer support and inspire leadership throughout the global connection; and celebrate wholeness, the recovery from brokenness.

SPSARV is housed at the Board of Global Ministries and collaborates with the Board of Church and Society.

Enacted in 1992 in response to the 1990 Council of Bishops Initiative on Drugs and Drug Violence, SPSARV provides training, financial assistance and support for United Methodist congregations to tackle alcohol and other drugs. SPSARV resources include grants, replication of models, education, advocacy and trainings.

For more information the web-site is www.umspsarv.org or call the SPSARV office at 866-944-3330.

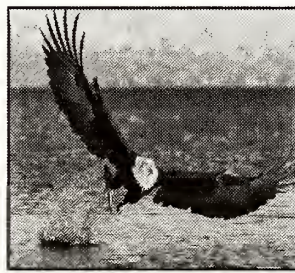
Contact the Rev. Cynthia W. Sloan, Program Associate by email at CSloan@bgm-umc.org.

Attracting young adults

As it continues to assess its economic situation, The United Methodist Church is going forward with a plan to do a system-wide study. The Connectional Table at its Nov. 6-8 meeting agreed to fund a proposal approved by the Council of Bishops to consider changes in the church's structure, from annual conferences to General Conference, from national agencies to the bishops' council.

Part of the point of the study is to figure out how to attract young people to the denomination—both

Springtime By The Sea "When I in Awesome Wonder"



An Event for Older Adults at
Epworth By The Sea
St. Simons Island, GA
May 17 - 20, 2010

VISIT

Okefenokee Swamp - National Wildlife Refuge and National Wilderness Area

CRUISE

Cumberland Island National Seashore
"America's Most Beautiful Wilderness Beach"

TOUR

Historic Fernandina Beach and the Amelia Island Museum of History

LISTEN

Peter, the Big Fisherman
As portrayed by the Rev. Lee Weaver

LEARN

Georgia Sea Turtle Center - Presentation on each of the 5 sea turtle species found in Georgia.



For more information contact Epworth at 912-638-8688 or visit our website at www.epworthbythesea.org.

2009 in review - The United Methodist Church *from page 3*

into full communion with The United Methodist Church, which had approved the agreement in 2008.

After the vote, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hugged Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, and thanked all who had labored in dialogue between the religious traditions founded by towering figures in Christian history—Martin Luther and John Wesley.

"You have taken up centuries of differences and found centuries of commonalities," Hanson declared.

The two denominations also joined with Catholics at a spirit-filled Oct. 1 service in Chicago to celebrate an historic agreement on justification by faith—how individuals are forgiven and brought into a right relationship with God. The three groups vowed to move toward greater unity.

Immigration

United Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño of Phoenix helped launch a national interfaith campaign for humane immigration reform, declaring at a Feb. 11 press conference in Washington that people of faith "cannot and will not stand by in silence while young people die, families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the immigrant community in the U.S. is treated unjustly and inhumanely."

Prayer vigils on immigration reform followed across the country during the Feb. 13-22 Congressional

recess. In November and December, houses of worship in Arkansas, Iowa, Ohio and Texas were holding special prayer services to press Congress to pass immigration reform that keeps families together—part of a larger campaign sponsored by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition.

A part of civil society

United Methodists were both observers of and participants in the Jan. 20 inauguration of Barack Obama as the first African-American U.S. president.

The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, 87, a dean of the civil rights movement, gave the benediction. Dorothy Height, 96, was among the special guests on the inaugural platform. Both had worked alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday was celebrated a day earlier.

In August, Lowery, who co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with King, was one of 16 people who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest honor for a civilian.

During the inaugural festivities, 40 United Methodist churches in the Washington area opened their doors to people from across the United States, offering food, fellowship and a place to sleep.

Health care

United Methodists were among the nearly 30 top leaders of Christian, Jewish and Islamic organizations who gathered July 7 at the

U.S. Capitol for a day of dialogue and planning on health care reform. "We must speak on behalf of the poor and marginalized here in the halls of power," said Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, one of the event's sponsors.

The denomination is embarking on a new campaign to fight malaria, Imagine No Malaria, with a public launch set for the next World Malaria Day—April 25, 2010.

The fundraising goal of \$75 million will expand grassroots programs like Nothing But Nets and develop more comprehensive efforts to promote prevention and education activities, strengthen health delivery systems and train health care workers to more effectively treat the disease.

Dealing with disaster

In Africa, United Methodists continued to respond to the political, economic and humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe, keeping church-related hospitals and clinics open.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief coordinated emergency relief efforts through The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and other groups.

In the United States, the swollen Red River left residents in the Dakotas and Minnesota scrambling to stop floodwaters in late March.

The Rev. Rich Zeck, pastor of First UMC in Fargo, N.D., was exhausted after spending 10 days bagging sand for the emergency dikes.

"We are tired, but the saying here is 'God is good and so is Advil,'" he said when reached by telephone. "Everyone is tired, but I am amazed that whenever a call is put out for volunteers, we have more than we need and we keep responding."

UMCOR worked with Church World Service and Muslim Aid over the spring and summer to assist the 2 million Pakistanis who fled the Swat Valley during fighting there between

government forces and the Taliban.

Those celebrating the July 24 grand opening of the UMCOR's new office and resource warehouse in the Philippines, based on the campus of Union Theological Seminary in Cavite, did not know the office would soon be assisting Filipinos as they dealt with the consequences of multiple typhoons over the fall.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops issued a Churchwide Appeal for Philippines Disasters on Nov. 19 in response to the multiple typhoons that have struck the country.

UMCOR was distributing emergency supplies to more than 11,000 displaced families.

Court rulings

The United Methodist Church's top court ruled in April that Southern Methodist University could lease campus property for the George W. Bush presidential library, museum and public policy institute, saying the agreement does not violate church law.

Critics opposed to many policies of the Bush administration, including the war in Iraq, argued placing the institute on university property would be inconsistent with church teaching.

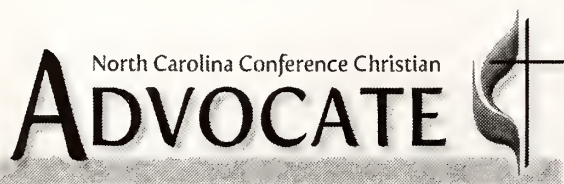
At its October meeting, the Judicial Council ruled that the Baltimore-Washington Annual (regional) Conference went too far in adopting its own sexuality statement, which declared "a more authentic and truthful representation of The United Methodist Church" is that "we disagree" on gay and lesbian issues.

The court said that while such statements can be "aspirational in nature," an annual conference "may not negate, ignore or violate" the *Book of Discipline*, "even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections."

** Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York.*

Duke Clergy Health Initiative launches "The Connection" blog

The Divinity School's Clergy Health Initiative has launched a blog, The Connection, to provide a variety of health resources tailored to the needs of pastors. Topics range from mental and physical health to communication and commitment. Visit the blog at <http://chi.divinity.duke.edu/>



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

Academy Day of Learning explores investing in people in the name of Christ

By Brian Gentle *

Almost 180 clergy and laity attended the Academy for Leadership Excellence "Day of Learning" at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh on Nov. 10.

Led by Mark Beeson and the Senior Leadership team from Granger Community Church (United Methodist) in Indiana, the theme for the event was "Building the Team Around." Participants came from as far away as Charlotte, Greensboro, Wilmington and New Bern. The national reputation of Granger also brought many non-Methodists.

In his opening presentation, Beeson recounted some of the details of the Granger story, which he and his wife planted in 1986.

The congregation now has an average worship attendance of 6,000 and is ranked among the top 10 most dynamic, cutting-edge United Methodist churches in the U.S.A.

Beeson said a necessary starting point for successful team building is for the congregation to have a focused mission and the lead pastor to cast a compelling vision for implementing that will capture the imagination and energize people for fulfilling this mission.

The mission of Granger is to reach

those who are un-churched. In a pop culture world of iPods, e-mails, text messages and Twitter, economic uncertainty and stress, the vision of Granger is to understand the language of the lives of those they are trying to reach.

A second step in building both a staff and lay team is to make sure team members also own the mission and shaping vision.

Mark Waltz, a Granger leadership staff team member, said that although he was personally liked Mark Beeson, what influenced him to join the church staff was the challenging mission and vision of Granger.

Beeson said another key in team building is to develop a culture of trust and truth telling. He noted, for example, that his communication staff person does not hesitate to tell him if she believes he has preached too long.

Effective leadership requires constant ministry evaluation. Granger often employs what they term outside "secret shoppers," who provide the leadership teams with authentic feedback as to how visitors first "experience" being at Granger.

Building teams also requires the careful recruitment and empowering of lay ministry teams. A leadership development strategy Granger



The Academy for Leadership Excellence's Day of Learning drew approximately 180 clergy and laity for a presentation by the leadership team from Granger Community Church in Indiana.

employs is what Mark Waltz termed the "Nordstrom" principle, which gives lay ministry teams permission to make personal, sensible judgment calls when it comes to carrying out ministry.

One example was how important it was for greeters or ushers to use their discretion as when not to be "over-friendly." Many first time visitors, he noted, might be introverts, who might be "turned-off" by over-aggressive expressions of hospitality.

A high point of the presentation was the showing of a video designed by the staff and lay musical and artistic team to recruit volunteers.

Using the music from Broadway plays including *Les Miserables*, *Annie* and *Chorus Line*, the video shared the joys and rewards that came from being engaged in servant ministry. Building ministry teams is about investing in people in the name of Christ.

Participant feedback from the day included comments such as "Awesome day! It is great to learn from thriving UM churches!" "Great job.

"Continue to bring national leaders who are helping to grow God's kingdom." "Good to hear solid material presented in a fresh way."

The mission of the Academy of Leadership Excellence is the help churches more effectively reach people for Christ through the commitment to growing the leadership effectiveness of both clergy and laity.

In addition to the Days of Learning, the Academy is developing a leadership development curriculum, mentoring leaders through coaching.

The next Day of Learning will again be held at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh on Tuesday, March 2 with Jorge Acevedo, from Grace UMC in Florida.

The theme, "Being a Transformational Leader," will focus on how to turn around a congregation that has become stagnant and is on a plateau and might even be dying. The Academy provides scholarships when needed.

* Brian Gentle is executive director of the Academy for Leadership Excellence.

conference CALENDAR

January

- 1 UM Building Closed
- 3 AGAPE Sunday
- 5-7 UMW Officers Retreat
Morehead City
- 9 Youth Service Fund Task
Force and Conference
Council on Youth Ministries
Meetings
- 12 Conference Communications
Committee, UM Bldg, 2pm
- 17 Human Relations Sunday
(Church-wide special offering)
- 18 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Celebration Day (UM
Building closed)
- 20 Apportionments for 2009
Cut-Off Date
- 27 Older Adult Ministries
Committee Meeting, 10am,
UM Building

February

- 13 Youth Lay Speaker Training
- 17 Ash Wednesday
- 21 Methodist Home for
Children Sunday
- 22 Conference Connectional
Table Meeting
- 23-25 Children's Ministry FORUM,
Edenton St. UMC
- 26 Board of Higher Education
and Campus Ministry
Meeting
- 26-27 UMW Conference 39 &
Under Event, St. Luke UMC,
Sanford
- 28 Camping Ministry Sunday

NC Conference events
are available online at
www.nccumc.org/calendar

United Methodist Communications announces changes to InfoServ

InfoServ, the official information service of The United Methodist Church, will become exclusively an e-mail and online information service effective April 1, 2010. At that time, telephone support services will be discontinued.

InfoServ is a ministry of United Methodist Communications in Nashville, TN, which announced in August some program and staff reductions in response to a growing budget deficit and a restructuring plan.

"In these challenging economic times, we must find ways to continue providing high-quality service in a more cost effective manner," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications.

"Telephone calls to InfoServ have been decreasing over the past couple of years as more people take advan-

tage of the Web or use e-mail to request information. We're committed to continuing to provide answers quickly and accurately, but technology allows us to do so more economically," Hollon said.

Customers are able to submit questions via e-mail at infoserv@umcom.org. Answers to the most frequently asked questions are also available online at www.infoserv.umc.org.

In addition, other customer-friendly options such as live chat and leaving a callback number will be explored during the transition period.

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NBA program supports anti-malaria campaign

"Send a net. Save a life. See a game," encourages a new program supporting Nothing But Nets sponsored by the National Basketball Association.

The Nothing But Nets campaign along with other worldwide efforts to end malaria are showing progress according to the World Health Organization's 2009 World Malaria Report released in December.

One-third of the 108 malaria-ravaged countries reduced malaria cases by more than 50 percent in 2008, compared to 2000. That means malaria cases have been cut in half in less than a decade.

The National Basketball Association (NBA) and the United Nations Foundation's Nothing But Nets recently tipped off the promotion to send anti-malaria bed nets to refugees in 11 African countries.

To encourage continued support, through Jan. 31, 2010, Nothing But Nets supporters can donate \$10 or more and get two complimentary tickets to an NBA game, subject to availability and participating teams.

ESPN sportswriter Rick Reilly, who inspired the foundation to create the Nothing But Nets campaign, will match fan donations up to a total of \$25,000. Further information is available at www.nothingbutnets.net. The United Methodist Church is a partner in the campaign.

IRS sets 2010 mileage rates

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, the business mileage rate will be reduced to 50 cents per mile.

The new rate for computing deductible medical or moving expenses will be reduced to 16.5 cents per mile.

The rate for providing services for charitable organizations is set by statute, not the IRS, and remains at 14 cents per mile.

The mileage rates for 2010 reflect generally lower transportation costs compared to a year ago. The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile.

See news release IR-2009-111 available in the newsroom at www.irs.gov for more details.

Goodpaster, bishop of Western NC Conference, elected to serve as president

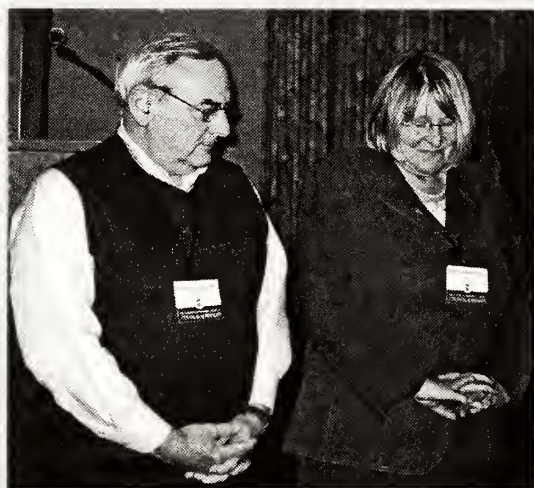
Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster of the Western North Carolina Conference will be the next president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops. He will serve a two-year term beginning May 6, 2010 and ending during the 2012 General Conference.

At its fall meeting held at Lake Junaluska, the council elected Goodpaster president and Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of Germany president-elect by a "staggering" majority, announced Bishop Gregory Palmer, current council president.

"It was exciting two years ago when I was in Bishop Wenner's place as president-elect, but now making it official I also feel the weight and the excitement of the possibilities," said Goodpaster, 61. "I am energized for this great opportunity to do something for Christ and his church that will have lasting benefits."

Power in the connection

Goodpaster was appointed to serve as the leader for the Western North Carolina Annual (regional)



United Methodist Bishops Larry M. Goodpaster (left) and Rosemarie Wenner are prayed over by other bishops after Goodpaster was elected president of the denomination's Council of Bishops during their fall meeting in Lake Junaluska. Wenner was named president-elect. In the background is Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr. (Photo by Kathy L. Gilbert. / UMNS)

Conference at the 2008 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Elected to the episcopacy in 2000, Goodpaster led the Alabama-West Florida Conference for eight years. Before his election, he served as a pastor and district superintendent in the Mississippi Conference.

His pastoral experience includes a five-church rural charge, a new congregation and several larger membership churches. He has taught in a variety of settings and published in various denominational publications. His latest book, *There's Power in the Connection*, was published in 2008 by Abingdon Press.

Goodpaster earned a bachelor of arts degree from Millsaps College, Jackson, Miss., and master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

A sign of trust

Wenner, 54, was elected bishop in 2005, becoming the denomination's first woman elected to the episcopacy outside the United States.

"When you are one of the central conference bishops, you don't come here thinking you are going to be a leader for the Council of Bishops," she said. "It was surprising when they asked me and a great sign of trust and expectations. The past presidents have set the stage for us to focus on the most important thing in the world, to make disciples for the transformation of the world."

A native of Eppingen in southern Germany, she had served as superintendent of the church's Frankfurt District since 1996. She studied at the United Methodist Theological Seminary in Reutlingen and has held pastorates in Karlsruhe, Hockenheim and Darmstadt.

The Council of Bishops represents 11.5 million United Methodists in the United States, Africa, Europe and Asia. It includes 69 active and 98 retired bishops.

* Kathy L. Gilbert is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

Missionaries to Liberia coming to NCC in February

Missionaries Herbert and Mary Zigbuo will be visiting churches in the NC Conference in February 2010.

Herbert serves the Church in Liberia as coordinator for the church's Vocational Training Unit offering Christ-focused programs for youth and young adults who could not attend school.

The goal is to equip these young adults with both educational and professional skills that will allow them to rise above their current station as societal liabilities.

Herbert is a native of Nengbein Town, Liberia, and received his primary education from the Ganta

United Methodist Mission School, where he would serve as administrator in the late 1980's.

Herbert studied mechanical engineering at NC Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro. He completed a Master's Degree in Religious Education at Duke University Divinity School in Durham.

Mary is helping develop programs for disabled persons — an area largely ignored within Liberian society. The majority of disabled Liberians rely upon already limited family resources and most resort to street begging.

She is helping expand vocational training for deaf, mute, and blind per-

sons as well as for victims of polio.

A native of Bolton, NC, Mary completed her undergraduate and graduate studies at NC Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Community Mental Health, a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling and a Master's Degree in Adult Education.

Churches are invited to contact the Rev. Bill Haddock, Conference Mission Secretary, at revbillh@nccumc.org or 910-762-2583 to schedule a time for the Zigbuos to visit and speak. Any size church or any size group can host the Zigbuos.

New program begins for NC Conference clergy counseling

The Conference Commission on Clergy Consulting and Consultation has endorsed CareNet to provide services for clergy and local church consultation, beginning in January 2010. CareNet, associated with Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, has centers and affiliates within the Conference in: Fayetteville, Greenville, Lumberton, Wilmington, Erwin, Pembroke, Rocky Mount, Supply, and Wallace.

There are more than 35 certified counselors and psychotherapists on the CareNet staff. A sister organization, The Center for Congregational Health, specializes in the health of congregations. Following are articles from the chair of clergy consulting and consultation, and the head of CareNet explaining the selection process and more about the service. For more information, visit www.carenetinc.org.



CareNet selected for consultation and educational services

By Regina Schaaf Dickens *

The Conference Commission on Clergy Counseling and Consultation has been meeting regularly since annual conference to determine how best to integrate services and supports for our Clergy and families into an overall wellness and leadership development approach.

We reviewed a number of existing and future programs and welcome ongoing collaboration with other initiatives in the future. We did not find an immediate fit for the services unique to the CCCS. Therefore we went outside the Conference to determine how best to continue the work that has been established in the past.

We are blessed to have found CareNet, a minis-

try partnership with Wake Forest University Baptist Hospital Medical Center's Division of Pastoral Counseling. This group has worked with pastors and churches within the North Carolina Conference in the past, and has United Methodist clergy on staff.

CareNet provides informational meetings at the district and local church level to acquaint potential clients with their therapeutic services. They also provide a wide variety of educational offerings to enhance family and marital life, congregational health, and leadership training for the local church.

They are available for telephone consultation with all pastors in the Conference to help determine how best to intervene in family life situations which arise within the community.

The CCCS looks forward to continued expansion of the work with CareNet as we explore additional opportunities to enhance the consultation/educational services within the context of developing healthy clergy and healthy congregations.

Jane Clark Moorman, who has served as director of the Clergy Counseling and Consultation Service, continues to be available to clergy and their families for counseling, psychotherapy, and mental health consultation through her private practice in Durham. She will negotiate fees with each individual person who seeks her services in accord with need. She can be reached at 919-402-4200.

* Dr. Regina Schaaf Dickens is the chair of Conference Commission on Clergy Counseling and Consultation.

"Called to serve, trained to help" is mission of CareNet

By Steven Scoggin *

"Called to serve, trained to help." These six words convey in the simplest form the mission of CareNet of North Carolina—a 21-location network of faith-based counseling centers placed across the state to serve the mental health and wellness needs of our co-workers, neighbors, and families.

CareNet is privileged to be partnering with the NC Conference of The United Methodist Church to provide high quality faith-integrated counseling to its clergy members and health and wellness services to its congregations.

The CareNet clinical staff is trained to provide spiritually-sensitive, non-judgmental counseling for a variety of emotional and spiritual needs—anger, anxiety, depression, abuse (including sexual, physical, and substance), crisis, trauma, and grief.

Services are also offered for the many types of family issues prevalent today such as marital problems, separation, divorce, step/blended families, and school-related problems.

In addition to treating traditional mental health needs, CareNet's Professional Services division is focused on wellness through prevention and growth and is available to lead lectures, workshops, retreats and on-going training including clergy support, coaching, stress management, relaxation, communication skills, addiction education, leadership development, parenting, and couples enrichment. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance in all of the CareNet centers. Providers understand

the isolation as well as the public position that clergy members must live in and realize the need for a confidential setting allowing an open, healthy relationship between the client and therapist.

CareNet complies with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPPA) standards. CareNet clinicians are all licensed with the state of North Carolina and include mental health professionals, psychotherapists, and psychologists.

On the website, www.carenetinc.org under "Map of Centers," is a listing of center locations

and phone numbers. Those seeking counseling can contact the director of the center located nearest to them for assistance finding a therapist.

CareNet appreciates the opportunity to work with the NC Conference. A strong commitment to clergy and congregational wellness through CareNet and, its sister organization, The Center for Congregational Health, provides resource to strengthen the mission of conference churches.

* Steven Scoggin is president of CareNet of North Carolina.

Funds available for clergy "out-of-pocket" expenses

The NCC Board of Ordained Ministry Clergy Care sub-committee provides funds to assist clergy families seeking counseling for any, or all, members of the immediate family. The fund provides up to \$400 per family per year to aid in "out of pocket" expenses. This fund is completely confidential – all persons seeking counseling are identified ONLY by case number – no member of any district staff or conference staff is aware of who is being seen by a professional therapist.

Applications for assistance are handled by the therapist. Clergy families are to utilize their insurance benefit first and have the therapist submit the application after the insurance coverage allowance has been determined. Forms are online at

www.nccumc.org. Under the Offices tab, select Ministerial Relations. The Clergy Care Form is available from the Downloads section. The therapist can also request forms by contacting the Office of Ministerial Relations at 800-849-4433, ext. 244 or via email to lcbourey@nccumc.org. All applications are mailed to the Office of Ministerial Relations, attention Linda Bourey, for processing.

The Board encourages all clergy families to be comfortable seeking counseling without concern about confidentiality and to know that there is no stigma attached in doing so. Seeking counseling is another opportunity to be healthy in self and in ministry.

Possible special session of General Conference has NC connections; conference would focus on clergy pensions, church-wide structure

By Kathy L. Gilbert *

The denomination's financial agency is asking the Council of Bishops to call a special session of General Conference to address funding pensions for US clergy and reorganization of its 40-year-old structure.

The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) approved a motion to encourage the bishops at their May 2010 meeting to call a special session before the planned April 25-May 4, 2012, General Conference in Tampa, Fla. GCFA also decided to work with the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits to help ensure annual conferences could pay clergy pension plans.

In November, the Council of

Bishops also discussed the idea of a special called session to discuss both matters. "I'm sensing there is a way in which those two things go together," Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, said Dec. 9. "I have put it (special session) on the agenda for the January executive committee meeting of the council as an item for more conversation."

Western NC bishop leads Call to Action Committee

Addressing the church-wide restructuring issue, a committee led by Bishop Larry Goodpaster, president-elect of the Council of Bishops and chair of the Call to Action Steering Committee, recommended hiring an outside consultant to do an audit of the church's structure when the

two bodies met in November.

The plan was approved by the bishops and the Connectional Table, a 60-member group responsible for coordinating the mission, ministries and resources of the Church.

Issues under consideration include eliminating guaranteed appointments for clergy, recruiting young leaders and exploring the "right sizing" of the denomination's general agencies and church activities.

Ward introduces idea of special session

The idea for a special session was introduced by Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of the Mississippi Annual (regional) Conference at the fall Council of Bishops meeting. Ward served in the NC Conference as direc-

tor of Connectional Ministries prior to being elected a bishop.

"If we move toward a four-year cycle in which all our old ways move us forward, I wonder if this dream can come to pass?" she asked, referring to the recommendations of the Call to Action Task Force. "It will require a different sort of gathering than a General Conference."

Leeland appointed to pension task force

The bishops also at the November meeting approved a special task force to respond to the challenges of funding clergy pensions.

Bishop Paul Leeland, former Assistant to the Bishop for the NC Conference, was assigned to the task force along with Bishops Jonathan Keaton, Scott Jones, Leo Soriano, Clifton Ives, and Warner Brown. Leeland now serves as bishop to the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

Bishop Ward helps focus Mississippi Conference on encouraging young people to answer call to ministry

By Vicki Brown *

Eleven percent of elders in The United Methodist Mississippi Annual (regional) Conference are under the age of 35, more than double the percentage of young elders nationally.

The conference's success is no accident, said church leaders attending EXPLORATION 2009, a national event for young people considering a call to ordained ministry.

Officials say the state is reaping the success of efforts including committing resources to campus ministry, holding annual calling events in the conference, having churches adopt seminarians and offering regular statewide youth events.

"Our bishop [Hope Morgan Ward] has a real heart for youth," said Kevin Murriel of Brandon, Miss., a student at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. "There's been an emphasis placed on youth involvement throughout the conference."

The conference has 41 elders under the age of 35 in 2009, or 11.11 percent of its 369 elders. In the United States, there are 906 provisional and ordained elders under the age of 35, or 5.25 percent of the total, according to the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington.

Mississippi has 27 campus ministry units across the state – one on every college campus, including community colleges, Ward said. All are Wesley Foundations, and she said many of the campus ministry boards



Bishop Hope Morgan Ward addressing General Conference in 2008.

and alumni are active in supporting those ministries.

"The Wesley Foundation at Mississippi State has more than 400 students and Wesley at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Perkinston gathers hundreds of students each week," Ward said.

Ward said United Methodists in the conference are conscious of supporting and staying in touch with seminarians since there is no United Methodist seminary in the state.

"When we make appointments, the young people are appointed first, and that may be helpful in keeping our seminarians in the conference," Ward said. "Many of them want to be associate pastors so they can have mentoring by a senior pastor. But if they want their own church, we try to appoint them to one that won't be so isolated."

The Rev. Lisa Garvin, conference director of Ministerial Services, said campus ministry is now the third largest item in the conference budget. "I think it's paying off," she said.

The things the annual conference has done are not rocket science but a continued focus on the issue, said the Rev. Karen Koons Hayden, pastor at Centenary UMC in McComb, Miss.

"Get your Ministerial Education Fund money in, sponsor a student to an event like EXPLORATION or a statewide calling event, adopt a seminary student, have a calling service in your local church every year," Hayden said. "Personally, I think it all comes back to mentoring and how seriously a church and pastor take their role in stewardship of the person. We do keep reminding pastors that it is part of their job."

Those connections may be one reason Mississippi does not lose seminary graduates to other conferences, Hayden said. She said there are a lot of hoops to jump through in the candidacy process and that "if you've got someone loving you, and supporting you, praying for you, and listening to you, it's easier."

Ryan Parker, a Duke Divinity School student from Hattiesburg, said his pastors and district superintendent took the time to talk to him as he was thinking about vocation.

"They would call and e-mail," Parker said. "They see it as a process of helping you to see what you couldn't see."

* Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Pension funding concerns

Barbara Boigegrain, top executive of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, said "robust" discussions about the economic downturn and the church's response to it have been going on for a year. The resolution from the General Council on Finance and Administration came as a surprise, however. "No one had asked questions of us," she said.

Boigegrain said the board has been gathering information from the annual conferences and has heard from all but two. She said all the conferences will be able to pay their responsibilities to pension funds for 2009 and 2010. Further analysis is ongoing, she said.

The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* states a special session of the General Conference may be called by the Council of Bishops.

A special session before the 2012 meeting would be composed of the delegates to the 2008 General Conference "except when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election it may do so."

The purpose of the special session should be stated in the call and only that business should be discussed unless there is a two-thirds vote by the delegates to add other business.

The last special session was in 1970 and was called to deal with the 1968 merger with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which created The United Methodist Church.

* Kathy L. Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

Training on financial best practices focuses on integrity, internal controls

By Julie Brown *

Integrity was a central theme at the 2009 Local Church Treasurer/Finance Training offered by the NC Conference Office of the Treasurer in early December hosted by St. Mark's UMC in Raleigh.

During an overview of the prevalence of fraud in today's society, Conference Controller Ivanna Cole quoted businessman Peter Scotese: "Integrity is not a 90 percent thing, not a 95 percent thing; either you have it or you don't."

A record 85 attendees learned about the importance of internal controls. Through internal controls, policies and procedures are put into place in an organization to ensure that risks of theft and fraud are minimized. These controls also protect innocent workers (i.e., from false accusations) and help detect errors as they occur.

Inadequate controls were cited as the most common factor in allowing fraud to occur based on an Association of Certified Fraud Examiners survey in 2008. In that survey, smaller organizations had a higher percentage of fraud than larger ones, and the most common reasons cited for the motivation behind perpetrator's actions were financial difficulties and living beyond their means.

The NC Conference Treasurer's Office has developed a draft document titled "Local Church Finance Minimum Standards" to help define the controls needed to be faithful stewards of God's resources. These suggested standards are in response to changes in *The Book of Discipline, 2008* which now requires each church's committee on finance to "establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the local church." (P258 c)

Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, and Cole discussed the standards. Some of the controls recommended include: church treasurer (outgoing money) and financial secretary (incoming money) should not

be the same person and should not be in the same immediate family; designated counting teams made of at least two unrelated persons should count the money and document the totals; offerings should be deposited by the next business day; invoices should be required for all payments from all accounts; all payments should be made only after approved by designated church leadership.

Additional recommendations on receipts and disbursements, reporting, review of documentation, tax reporting (i.e., all pastors and staff should receive a W-2 by January 31 of the subsequent year), insurance, audits and other subjects are also included in the document.

Recognizing that churches of various sizes have different challenges, the Treasurer's Office and District Superintendents' offices are available to support local churches as they

develop their own written financial policies. Questions can be directed to the Treasurer's office at 800-849-4433 or helpdesk@nccumc.org.

From the General Council on Finance and Administration, a "Local Church Audit Guide" was shared which details the steps needed for the audits as required in *The Book of Discipline*.

The training session also included time for churches to share their "best practices" ideas. These best practices are being collected on the Treasurer's Office website.

During the discussion, clarification was given on valid mileage reimbursements for pastors and other church staff. It was noted that the commute from the pastor's or staff's homes to the church and return home is considered their normal commute by IRS and is generally not deductible or reimbursable for business mileage. However, if special situations exist where it can be proven that the pastor or staff has a valid home office per IRS standards then the mileage reimbursement would be appropriate. Details on the mileage rule can be found in IRS Publication 463, <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p463.pdf>.

Best practices relating to steward-



RIGHT: Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, (center) talks with Myrtle Williams (left) and Lynn Williams (right) from Oak Grove UMC in Roxboro. (Photos by Bill Norton)



Ivanna Cole, conference controller

ship were presented by Lynn James, executive director of the United Methodist Foundation (www.umf-nc.org).

For those who were unable to attend the training, the session was videotaped and will be made available on the conference website. The presentation handouts will also be available. Visit <http://nccumc.org/treasurer> for more information or call 800-849-4433.

To join an ongoing discussion of finance-related issues, an e-mail list is hosted by the Treasurer's Office. Enrollment is available from <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/local-church-treasurerfinance-email-discussion-group/>. Members of this list can ask each other questions and share their insights with the group.

* Julie Brown is a member of the finance committee at Fuquay-Varina UMC.

Caring for Creation event coming in April

The Christian faith challenges people to be caretakers of Earth, their home given by God. Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center's 5th annual Caring for Creation event, scheduled for April 8-11, will help members of the faith community learn how they can become caretakers of the Earth.

Over the course of Caring for Creation, 20 workshops, including Biblical/Theological Foundations for Creation Care, Native American Spirituality and Creation Care, and Mapping Your Ecological Footprint,

are offered. A pre-experience to spend 24 hours in a sustainable community (April 7-8) is available.

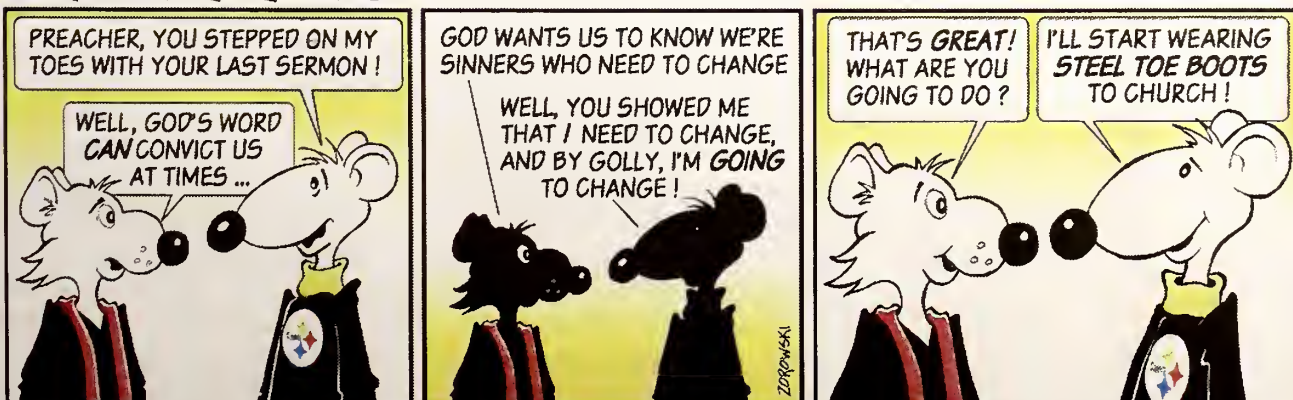
During Friday morning registration, attendees may participate in a number of onsite and off-site tours. Among these tours are visits to a solar farm, an oil to biodiesel conversion facility, a green-built home, the Junaluska Wetlands and the Corneille Bryan Native Garden.

Lake Junaluska has received a grant from the General Board of Church and Society EMLC funds to provide scholarships for ethnic young

adults (ages 18-35) to participate in the 2010 Caring for Creation.

Early registration deadline is March 5. For details and scholarship information, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx.

Church Mice



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Ministry supports women veterans fighting cancer *from page 1*

Gifford's own mission effort began after she was diagnosed with cancer. As she was being treated, she saw others decline as their energy levels waned and they became self-conscious about things like hair or weight loss. "When they start whittling away, they're helpless," said Gifford.

Gifford, 50, had strong support in her fight from her husband, Derek, and her pastors, but she still felt overwhelmed and alone at times as she navigated the bureaucratic world of Veterans Administration medical care.

It can be difficult for veterans to find support networks because they travel to VA clinics in places like Durham, often far from home, and they never learn of local care and support opportunities.

"Veterans don't know what's available to them because they don't go to the medical facilities here" in their home towns, Gifford said.

Gifford found a breast lump five years ago, and her treatment ultimately led to a mastectomy and removal of her lymph nodes about 18 months ago.

The unpleasant experience was made worse by a two-hour ride home holding her arm in an uncomfortable position. She wished someone had told her to bring a pillow on which to prop her arm, and after getting home she longed for more information as questions about her cancer began cropping up in her mind.

In the shower, she learned how difficult it can be to bathe with an 18-inch drain tube protruding from the surgical wound left after the lymph nodes came out. When a friend told her how a specially-made cloth bag can hold the tube steady and out of the way, Margo celebrated and, again, wished she had found out sooner. She also decided she needed to do something. "This became a mission for me," Gifford said. "I wish I'd had more support."

Gifford's mission started small – she gathered resource information and practical tips for women

facing surgery like "wear a button-up shirt – a pull-

over won't work when you're sore."

After hearing of Margo's mission, her church's UMW Circles provided hand-made pillows and drain bags and knit caps decorated with frilly touches to provide a lighthearted answer to hair loss, and the United Methodist Men provided money for blankets.

With these and many other donations, Margo was able to put together over 80 large tote bags – also donated – that could be given through the Durham VA Hospital to female veterans battling cancer.

Although Gifford is focused on providing support to others, she feels supported by her work.

"It makes me feel good in my heart," Gifford said.

Recently, Gifford began assembling resource kits for male veterans facing cancer, and she faced a challenge when she began thinking what to put in the bags for men. Frilly, pretty hats just didn't seem right.

"I prayed. I said, 'Lord, what do I put in these bags?'"

The answer came when a friend showed her some ink-pad stamps being donated in an unrelated effort. One of the stamps spelled out "journey," and Gifford felt God telling her to stamp the men's bags and the composition notebooks being placed in the bags with the word. She hopes the men will keep journals of their journeys in the notebooks.

Gifford said she feels her bag mission is winding down – there is a surplus of bags for women, and she will likely finish her work after completing the kits for the men.

Gifford has begun to feel a new calling, but she doesn't know exactly what it will be. She also believes there are unmet needs in other communities – opportunities for congregations to reach out to their local veterans.

Congregation members seeking a way to help veterans have strong resources on which to call. Gifford

took the first steps on her mission with the guidance and support of her pastors, and she recommends others seek pastoral guidance when getting started. The results will be well worth it.

"I've been so blessed," she said.

* Benjamine C. Deck is a member of First UMC in Washington.

LEFT: Tote bags filled with pillows, knit caps, and other items are ready for distribution.



At their fall Faith in Action Sunday, volunteers from Garber UMC and the community helped over 200 people have full vision exams. (Photo courtesy New Bern Sun Journal)

Garber UMC *from page 1*

About 300 children and adults attended. Participation was on a walk-in basis. Of those attending, 216 people had full vision exams and another 50 people received vouchers for exams the following week. In addition, 100 people received vouchers for glasses.

Eye doctors found many people with cataracts, some glaucoma suspects, and one patient with papilledema.

Nurses who took blood pressure and blood sugar checks, found people with potential problems in these areas.

The vision clinic was one of a

number of service projects that Garber church members participated in for the church's third Faith in Action Sunday. These projects are part of Garber's mission charge to be a faith in action church.

Other projects included making repairs at Religious Community Services, Camp Don Lee and Neuse Forest Presbyterian Church; baking cookies to give to local teachers in the school system; and doing yard work projects.

For more information about Faith in Action at Garber, call the church at (252) 637-4022 or visit www.garberumc.com

Centenary UMC *from page 1*

"The need is great," admits Rev. Pate-Greenwood, "and the charitable giving actually is up."

Earlier in the year a local business approached the church with an idea for helping the most needy in the community at Thanksgiving.

Morgan's Tavern and Grill is a local restaurant owned and operated by a young couple who offered to donate 5% of lunch sales every Tuesday, from May through November to purchase turkeys for the homeless and poor to enjoy at Thanksgiving. The congregation was encouraged to eat at Morgan's on Tuesdays through reminders in the worship bulletin and the newsletter.

A complete and nutritious Thanksgiving dinner was prepared and served at Religious Community Services (RCS), an interfaith ministry that provides meals for homeless and food insecure people, plus shelter, resale clothing and household items, and financial assistance for people in crisis.

The "Tuesday Turkeys" served 1,200 people at RCS on Thanksgiving Day. Meals also were delivered to the Methodist Home for Children in New Bern. In addition, 50 turkeys were

given to Interfaith Refugee Ministry for families that have resettled in New Bern.

"Centenary Church prepares for Christmas with genuine enthusiasm," said Pate-Greenwood. "The youth receive lists of wants and needs, and with money raised through service they shop for children and practice the cheerful giving for which the congregation is known." Adult classes and groups welcome the opportunity to shop, wrap and deliver gifts to families who register for holiday assistance through the Department of Social Services or other agency. Boxes of food with staples and specialty items are prepared for the families at Christmas time, along with the gifts.

For three nights in the week of Christmas, a Living Nativity expresses the reason for the season of giving. With live animals, authentic costumes and an elaborately constructed set, the celebration of a baby begins. The shepherds gather and the angels keep watch. The magi complete their journey to see this tiny king, and in time it is revealed that God loved the world so much he gave his own son.

Highlights from Higher Education

Louisburg College has accreditation reaffirmed by commission

By Amy Scoggin McManus *

Louisburg College is accredited through 2016 following a vote by The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools meeting in Atlanta on Dec. 8.

The College was on monitoring and sanction since its 10-year review in 2006, primarily for issues relating to financial resources and stability.

"We have turned the corner and made extraordinary progress in extremely difficult economic times.

I am grateful for the persistence and loyalty of the trustees, alumni, friends, faculty, and staff of this historic institution," said College President Dr. Mark La Branche.

"The Trustees welcome the reaffirming of the College's accreditation as yet another sign that we are on the best path possible," said Board Chairman Dr. John Cameron. "Our role in helping to educate young men and women has never been more secure, nor has our commitment been more pronounced. The

accreditation was not a surprise."

"While it took a lot of prayers, hard work and diligence, our team of trustees, administrators, faculty and staff once again demonstrated their love and commitment for the College. They just willed it to happen," Cameron said.

Chartered in 1787, the College is related by faith to The United Methodist Church and provides its students the support they need to grow intellectually and spiritually.

"The College will now embark on

an ongoing process of continuous improvement, increasing its strength and stability. Louisburg College will continue its proud tradition as the only two-year residential college in North Carolina, and the oldest in the nation. We want to more fully deliver on our promise to our students of providing, 'Strong Foundations for Great Futures,'" says La Branche.

* Amy Scoggin McManus is the director of Marketing and Communications at Louisburg College.

NC Wesleyan increases scholarships for United Methodist students

North Carolina United Methodist students who seek admission to North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount may now be eligible for more scholarships and more funding than ever before, the college recently announced.

"The United Methodist Church helped found North Carolina Wesleyan College in 1956. The school has been affiliated with the church for more than 50 years, and Wesleyan's recent increase in scholarships and funding for United Methodist students will help strengthen the college's ties with the Church," said Gary L. Sherman, Wesleyan's vice president of enrollment.

"The additional financial assistance will also help Wesleyan attract

and educate more United Methodist students, which is one of our goals. Our Admissions Office looks forward to hearing from students who may qualify for these scholarships."

Awards of particular interest to United Methodist students within the NC Conference include:

The Wesleyan United Methodist Scholarship, which provides \$2,000 annually. The scholarship requires a letter of recommendation from the student's pastor.

The Blackburn Scholarship is an award of \$500-\$1,500. Students must demonstrate a commitment to Christian ideals and character. The scholarship is renewable for four years and requires a 3.0 GPA for renewal.

The Cannon Scholarship awards

\$2,000-\$3,000 annually to students who have made a commitment to the ordained ministry.

The Ministerial Scholarship now provides 50 percent of Wesleyan's annual tuition, room and board to dependents of full-time, licensed ordained ministers of the United Methodist Church in the NC Conference. This scholarship is extended to students of all faiths in churches located in Nash, Edgecombe, Franklin, Halifax, Johnston, Wake, Warren and Wilson counties. Eligible students must be seeking their first bachelor's degrees, and funds may be applied only to traditional academic programs of study. The scholarship replaces all other institutional merit and/or academic awards a student

might otherwise receive.

The Wesleyan Singers Scholarship awards \$4,000 to members of The Wesleyan Singers choral ensemble open to all students with an interest in vocal performance. This competitive scholarship, open to students of any religious affiliation, is awarded after the student completes a successful audition with the director of The Wesleyan Singers and is renewable each year upon recommendation of the director.

For further information about any of the scholarships, contact Wesleyan's Chaplain, Reverend Barry P. Drum, bpdum@ncwc.edu or 252-985-5192, or call Wesleyan's Admissions Office at 252-985-5100 or 800-488-6292.

Methodist University's accreditation is reaffirmed by SACS

By Maria Sikoryak-Robins *

Methodist University President Elton Hendricks recently announced the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) has reaffirmed Methodist University's accreditation. All institutions accredited by the COC

undergo a review for reaffirmation of accreditation every 10 years.

The SACS-COC reaffirmation process involved three parts: 1. Compliance certification was submitted and preliminary findings were reported to the institution. 2. A focused report and quality enhancement plan were submitted, and an on-site visit was

hosted on the campus of Methodist University. 3. A response to the report was issued and an action letter was commissioned indicating a reaffirmation of accreditation.

"I am grateful to all the members of the MU community who worked so hard," said Dr. Hendricks. "All of us in some way had a part in this achievement, but there were a number of people who worked particularly hard and spent great time and energy making this happen. I am particularly grateful to Don Lassiter's leadership." Dr. Lassiter serves as the vice president for planning and evaluation at Methodist University.

Methodist University is an independent four-year institution of higher education with over 2,100 students from 41 states and 30 countries. The institution offers over 70 majors and concentrations, three master's degree programs, and 19 NCAA III intercollegiate sports. Methodist University is accredited to

award associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees.

* Maria Sikoryak-Robins is director of university publications at Methodist University.

Inauguration at Africa University

"As a dream turned reality, Africa University has become a seed of the higher education tree on the African continent. Africa shall no longer be left behind in higher education," said Bishop David Kekumba Yemba, new chancellor of United Methodist-related Africa University during the inauguration ceremony in December. The university was founded in 1992.

Yemba, 66, is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Vice Chancellor Fanuel Tagwira is a pioneer staff

member of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Other activities at the celebration included the dedication of the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance building and a seminar on "Financing Institutions of Higher Learning in the 21st century."

The new leaders pledged commitment to the cause of higher education on the continent during the ceremony attended by more than 500 dignitaries from around the world.

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An Alternative Way To Travel With Someone You Can Trust



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

February 7, 2010

Text: Matthew 15:21-28

**"Recognized by
a Canaanite Woman"**

Although there are numerous issues to be pursued in this week's study text (ethnic relationships, Jesus' challenge of the Canaanite woman, the desperate plea from the woman, the recognition of her faith),

I want to settle in on verse 23: "But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.'"

Alas, I hear the disciples' response echoed in the Church's answer to a world crying for help.

There is an unrelenting need to help those captured by AIDS.

There is the constant plea from those who are starving within a broader culture of plenty.

There is the painful reminder over and over again of how oppressive attitudes keep others from their full potential.

There is the lonely cry of those who seek to understand why cancer strikes both the just and the unjust.

There is the screech of the environment that we are abusing and even destroying.

It doesn't let up. No wonder the disciples said, "She keeps shouting after us."

And we, like the disciples, seek to protect Jesus from all of this. And we, like the disciples, seek to protect ourselves from all of this. Do you remember how the disciples tried to get Jesus to ignore the children (Matthew 19:13)?

Do you remember how those around Jesus tried to hush up two

blind men (Matthew 20:31)?

Do you remember a time when the Church tried to minimize or ignore the world's cry for help?

I was visiting in a congregation when one of the members got up to tell about a missions opportunity the congregation could address. I heard a voice behind me groan: "She does that every week. I get tired of hearing about all that."

But, praise God, Jesus does not need to be protected.

The final word of this week's study lesson is that "her daughter was healed instantly" (15:28). How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus gave this gift of healing? How do we feel when the money and time we give becomes an act of healing?

And, how do we feel, when they "keep shouting after us" (Matthew 15:23)?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. has written (*Good News to the Poor*, Abingdon Press) "While this divine aid certainly includes the proclamation of the gospel, it entails as well help in every form of distress and affliction. Salvation is holistic because the Savior is also the Creator."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord, give me ears to hear..."

February 14, 2010

Text: Matthew 16:13-27

"Declared by Peter"

I like Reginald Ponder. I value and appreciate the values and gifts he brings to ministry. I celebrate the victories for our Lord that have emerged wherever Reggie has been appointed or employed. Nevertheless, something inside of me resisted when someone said to me, "I think you did a wonderful job as President of Louisburg College!"

It was obvious that she had confused Reggie with me. It was he—not I—who was President of Louisburg (and indeed he did "a wonderful job").

Even when it is a compliment, there is something not quite right about being confused with someone else.

That is what Jesus faced in this

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* series.

text. People had confused him with a pretty good list of men of faith: John the Baptizer, Elijah, Jeremiah, or some other prophet (Matthew 16:14).

But that's not who he was.

Jesus asks, "Who do you say that I am?" David Harvin says that Jesus was inquiring in this manner: "When you hear those mistaken views of who I am, how do you correct folks?" That is a tougher question than simply "What about you? Who do you think I am?" It is not so easy to reply to Jesus' nudge: "When you hear something wrong about me, how do you go about correcting it?"

How do we correct a view that Jesus is not concerned about social justice?

How do we correct a view that the love of Jesus is for people who have the same (choose your word: beliefs, orientation, piety, church membership) as I do?

How do we correct a view that life is the same before and after an encounter with our Lord?

How do we correct a view that Jesus is a nice man who tolerated all behavior?

How do we correct a view that personal conversion has nothing to do with the community of believers?

The disciples (at least, Peter) did not like what Jesus said about who he was (16:22).

That is pretty much the way it is: I'm okay with following Jesus as long as I get to define the terms.

Suffering by the Messiah? Death? Some strange kind of resurrection? Peter did not want it that way.

And, alas, I can think of a number of ways I do not want Jesus to come to me, a number of things to which I do not want Jesus to invite me.

Oh, yes, Reggie. I did not bother to correct her. I just thanked her.

What Someone Else Has Said:

John Gooch (*Being a Christian in*

the Wesleyan Tradition, Discipleship Resources) has written: "The key doctrine of Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is our Savior. The difference comes when we try to explain how Jesus saves us."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Jesus, Messiah, Lord..."

February 21, 2010

Text: Matthew 17:1-12

"Witnessed by Disciples"

Usually, we think we would like to have been with Jesus when the great moments in his ministry occurred.

Well, maybe not the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-12). For one thing, it severely shook up the disciples ("...they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear"). That's not my idea of a good time.

Then, there is this problem of having some really good gossip to share and Jesus says, "Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (17:9).

What's the point of being present when this remarkable scene unfolds—face shining like the sun, clothes becoming dazzling white, a talking bright cloud—if you cannot tell anybody!

Maybe sometimes it is better not to have been there, even with Jesus!

(A few months ago, I came home to discover that shelving in our book room had given away and dumped about a thousand books into a jum-

See "Bible Study," page 13

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BIRTH

A daughter, Grace Elizabeth was born to Laura (Rocky Mount: Elm City) and Judson Dunlap (RM: Sandy Cross) on Nov. 22.

DEATH

TYSON, Bobby Tyson, Sr. (Goldsboro: Retired) died November 22. Two services were held on Nov. 25. A memorial service was held at Elevation UMC in Benson and a celebration of life service was held later that day at Spring Hill UMC in Lillington.

February adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

bled heap onto the floor, commentaries now mixed with studies of Presbyterianism on top of journals from General Conference piled on novels by Chaim Potok—well you get the picture. I assure you that I am glad that no one was at home when that horrendous collapse sent that crashing sound throughout the house. I am glad to have missed it!

But the disciples were there at the Transfiguration and they responded with what the King James translation says so poetically: “they were sore afraid.”

Does that ring a bell? It is the same response that the shepherds had when the angel and the glory of the Lord gave prelude to the announcement of Jesus’ birth (Luke 2:9). It is the same reaction the disciples had when they heard of the resurrected Christ (Mark 16:8).

Have we gotten too cozy with Jesus? This theme of fear-awe-terror seems to run through the story of encounters with the Lord. This seems to be a far cry from some contemporary efforts to make Jesus seem as “my best buddy.” The Transfiguration was not a setting for warm and fuzzy. Maybe one clue that it is indeed the Lord we meet might be if we are shocked.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In writing about the Transfiguration, Laurence Hull Stookey (*Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*, Abingdon Press) has said: “If the conversation on the mountain points to the crucifixion, the glistening appearance of Jesus prefigures

the resurrection. Dazzling brightness is another form of theological shorthand; it commonly has eschatological reference. (The Revelation again and again refers to the brightness of the garments in heaven.)”

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “Amazing Love!”

February 28, 2010

Text: Matthew 26:6-13
“Anointed by a Woman in Bethany”

The way Matthew gives this account, the woman who anointed Jesus is unnamed (26:7). Here is an amazing model of one who gives her all to show devotion to Jesus and we do not know her name!

But isn’t that the way it is? For every person who claims to have been brought to faith by the preaching of Billy Graham or the writing of Rick Warren, there are thousands upon thousands who name some unknown soul as the shaping mentor in the faith.

Perhaps it is a teacher or a parent or an itinerant pastor or a young adult friend...the gift of faith and the nurturing of faith often comes through “the woman,” a spiritual hero or heroine whose name is unknown.

Of course, it is rather remarkable that rabbi Jesus was in the home of a leper (26:6).

Being with a leper was hardly what one would expect of a Jewish teacher!

Touching the leper (or touching what the leper touched) would make one religiously unclean, yet here is our Lord spending time—perhaps even a meal—with a leper.

During this Lenten season, we might well ask “Who is missing from the Lord’s Table at my local church? Who is missing because we have made them feel unclean, unwelcomed? Whose native language or sexual orientation or mental capacity or religious journey has made them a leper? Is Jesus willing to eat with them?”

There are at least two troubling challenges in this text:

(1) If God uses “unknown” persons in the faith journey of others who share the highway, what excuse do I have for not being a transformative witness?

(2) If Jesus shows welcome to strangers and lepers as well as close friends, what excuse do I have for wanting to keep things just as they have always been at the church I attend?

Surely these verses are intended for someone else, not you and me. Maybe.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Karl Barth (*God in Action*, Round Table Press) wrote: “God Himself must speak for God, and God alone is adequate as God’s witness...In fact, every real witness has known and confessed: God is His own witness...If God makes use of (human beings), nevertheless, a miracle is happening...But God lets the miracle happen, lets it happen in the mystery of His will, that there are, nevertheless, (persons) who are witnesses of Him.”

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “God of the ages, time and time again You have reached into the hearts and minds of humankind and planted a saving witness. Make of my life such a fertile soil that the seed You plant may grow into faithful and gift-giving testimony of Your love...”

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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Confirmation Events

NCC confirmation celebration

The NC Conference Confirmation Celebration will be Saturday, March 6 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Registration begins at 10 a.m. and the program at 10:30 a.m. The day's emphasis will be the membership covenant vows of prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Lunch will be included. The service project will be Operation Sharehouse with Stop Hunger Now. Bishop Gwinn will share with the confirmands and preside at Holy Communion. Groups planning to attend must pre-register by Monday, Feb. 22. The cost will be \$15 per person (covers lunch and a portion of the shipping costs for the Stop Hunger Now service project). More information and the registration form can be found at www.nccumc.org/youth. There is a need for confirmation groups willing to provide leadership for the event. A representative of any group interested in exploring such an opportunity should contact senicholson@nccumc.org.

Confirmation retreat at Chestnut Ridge

The Confirmation Retreat at Chestnut Ridge will be Feb. 26-28. Speakers and leaders include Bill Gattis, Molly Shivers, Jan Thornton-Irvine, Duane Partin, Rich Greenway and Rhonda Parker. Plenary and workshop topics include baptism, scripture, service, worship, Methodism, and Christian life. Activities include worship, small group break-out sessions, stole making, music, service and traditional camp fun (campfires, smores, canoeing). Cost for the event is \$80 per participant, which covers 2 nights of lodging, 4 meals (all 3 meals Saturday and breakfast Sunday), and program materials. Churches are asked to provide one adult chaperone per six confirmands. For questions and to register, email rhonda@campchestnutridge.org.

Church and Society ethnic local church, human relations grants

Jan. 10 is the deadline to apply for two grants offered by the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) — for Ethnic Local Church Grants and for Human Relations Day Grants. For more information about these opportunities, visit www.umbc-gbcs.org and select the Leadership Development / GBGS Grants option from the menu. The ethnic local church program seek to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership training and development as they engage in social justice. For more information, go to GBGS Ethnic Local Church Grants.

Human Relations Day Grants are to support ministries that respond to non-violent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development. Grant funds are raised through the Church's Human Relations Day Special Sunday each year. Human Relations Day Sunday is Jan. 17.

Two types of grants available for Older Adult Ministry

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is providing two kinds of grants: Intergenerational Ministry grants and Caregiving Ministry grants during the 2009-2012 quadrennium.

These grants, part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries, are available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions. Applications will be reviewed and recipients selected by the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries.

For more information or to request printed applications, contact:
Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries—GBOD
PO Box 340003 — Nashville, TN 37203-0003.
Telephone: 615-340-7177 or Toll free: 1-877-899-2780 ext. 7177.
Email: tkline@gbod.org Website: www.aging-umc.org

Youth Lay Speaker Training

There will be a youth-only lay speaker training on Saturday, Feb. 13 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Methodist Building in Raleigh. Linda Harris, conference director of Lay Speaking will be the facilitator. Applications are available at www.nccumc.org/youth. The application deadline is Feb. 5. Youth must be in grades 8-12 and their application must be accompanied by their pastor's recommendation. There is no cost for the training and lunch will be provided.

Summer camp registration is open

Online summer camp registration for Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish is now open. Camping opportunities include residential camps, day camps, family camps, adventure camps and more. For detailed descriptions of the variety of options, visit www.campchestnutridge.org, www.donleecenter.org, and www.camprockfish.org.

Books, curriculum giveaway

With the impending move of Conference staff offices to the new building, there are lots of books, curriculum, videos and other resources that won't make the move to the new conference headquarters in Garner. In order to share these with others who might find use for them, there will be a Book and Resource Giveaway Extravaganza on Friday, Feb. 5 from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. and on Saturday, Feb. 6 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Methodist Building in Raleigh. Books, curriculum and other resources from conference ministries and the Media Center will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please make note of this opportunity for free resources and plan to participate during one of the two days.

Clergy Spouses' Day Apart

Save this date, April 24 as an exciting day is planned for clergy spouses. In place of an overnight event, a Spouses' Day Apart will be held at the First UMC in Nashville, NC, from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Margaret Therkelsen, a well-known person of prayer and faith, speaker and author, will be the keynote speaker. She has a marvelous story to tell and a message to inspire all. The cost of \$20 will include your lunch and snack breaks. Childcare will be provided. For information and a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/events/csdp/>.

Faith and Health Summit

The Council's Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW) Program will hold its 2010 Faith and Health Summit on Tuesday, March 23 at Raleigh's First Baptist Church (on Wilmington Street) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The program will begin with a keynote address by Gary Gunderson, one of the nation's leading experts on issues of faith and health, and include informative sessions on a variety of health topics. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this critical gathering of congregants, faith leaders and health professionals from across the state! More details, such as instructions for registration and an agenda, will be provided at a later date.

Workshop on effective small membership ministry

Hinton Rural Life Center is hosting the workshop, "The Small Membership Church: Keys to Effective Ministry" featuring Ron and Bonnie Crandall and the yet-to-be named executive secretary of Rural/Urban Networks of GBGM.

This event will be Feb. 22-24, 2010. The registration fee for the three-day event is \$125 plus room and board. To see a brochure, go to http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys_Workshop_Brochure.pdf.

around the CONFERENCE

Hertford UMC celebrates events reaching "beyond their walls"

This fall, Hertford UMC was part of two events which reached beyond the church's walls into their community.

The first was the completion of a seven-part study entitled, "Make Us One With Christ." This study was a joint effort between Hertford UMC and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. This study is part of an on-going dialogue between the two denominations, the goal of which is full communion.

The Rev. John Bonner of Holy Trinity Episcopal and the Rev. Gayla Collins of Hertford UMC led the study with the sessions meeting alternately in each congregation's building.

Participants enjoyed getting to know members of the each other's congregation as well as learning about each other's history and traditions. At one session held at Hertford UMC, the Rev. Charles M. Smith, retired UM pastor and a current member of the Duke Divinity

School faculty, gave an update on the current discussions between the denominations.

The study concluded with a historic worship service in which Collins and Bonner celebrated Holy Communion. Both congregations look forward to future joint ministries.

The second event took place in November when Hertford hosted a Thanksgiving worship service which was followed by a meal prepared and served by church members.

Sadat Mendez conducted the service in English and Spanish. The congregation was made up of people from several races and nationalities.

Following the service, the congregation of nearly 100 gathered in the fellowship hall for a traditional Thanksgiving meal which included several Latin American dishes.

Collins said that the next multicultural service and fellowship meal would take place on Three Kings Sunday, Jan. 10.



Following a multicultural Thanksgiving service conducted in English and Spanish at Hertford UMC, nearly 100 people gathered for a traditional Thanksgiving meal which also included several Latin American dishes. The church also recently completed a seven-part study entitled, "Make Us One With Christ." This study was a joint effort between Hertford UMC and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. This study is part of an on going dialogue between the two denominations, the goal of which is full communion.



Mary Ruckle, the eldest member of New Hope UMC, shovels the first spade of soil over the church's bicentennial time capsule. The children, who may be the ones opening it in 2034, then finished burying the time capsule.

Historic time capsule buried on church grounds at New Hope

By Patricia A. Walker Murphy *

With several firm taps, the cover of the New Hope UMC bicentennial time capsule clanked shut, sealing inside the artifacts and mementos of a current generation to be opened in 2034 by a future generation that is largely yet unborn.

Don and Pat Oglesby, who donated the capsule, gathered the items that went into the six-inch diameter by 24 inch long stainless steel container. They filled the capsule with the historic documents, sealed it up with a special silicone sealant, and then coated it with wax.

"What the capsule will provide, to those who open it in the far distant future, is a valuable "snapshot" in time of what the church looked like in 2009," said the Rev. Bill Masciangelo.

"The time capsule contains historic and significant information. I pray that when the New Hope congregation opens the capsule in 25 years they will read their history and have a greater appreciation of the past and are aware that every day they, too, are making memories and writing a history for others," Masciangelo said.

On Sunday, Nov. 22., Dr. R. Carl Frazier, Jr., district superintendent, Elizabeth City District, led the traditional communion worship service. Following the worship service, Fra-

zier led the congregation to the front lawn of the church and said a prayer and presided over the burial of the time capsule ceremony.

The capsule was placed about two feet into the ground. The following items were included in the church time capsule: church bulletins; 2 very special hymns that are favorites of the congregation; New Hope UMC 200th Anniversary 1809-2009 cookbook; two pictures of New Hope's Sunday School classes taken on Sunday, 16 Nov. 2009; New Hope UMC 200th Anniversary Family Directory; the NC Conference Christian Advocate newspaper with an article about New Hope UMC's Vacation Bible School that was held in July 2009; and A History of New Hope United Methodist Church 1809-2009.

Addressing the audience that had gathered on the front lawn, Rev. Frazier asked Mary Ruckle, the eldest member of New Hope UMC, to shovel the first spade of soil over the time capsule.

Rev. Frazier then said "It would be appropriate that the children standing around the capsule should now completely cover the capsule with soil as they will be the ones opening it 25 years from now."

* Patricia A. Walker Murphy is a staff writer for New Hope UMC.

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Children celebrate the reason for the season at Concord UMC

By Tim Chandler *

"Wow!"

That was one of the first statements from the Rev. Karl Neuschaefer after he witnessed a children's production at Concord UMC in Roxboro entitled "A Shepherd's Story" and the birthday party for Jesus which followed.

"With so much distraction from colored lights and tinsel and our consumeristic culture, how refreshing to see the emphasis placed back where it truly belongs," Neushaefer said. "What warmed my heart most was to see Christ once again as the true focus of the Christmas season."

Sunday evening's event at Concord marked the second year children in the church celebrated with a birthday party for Jesus and the first year a production by the newly-formed children's choir was held.

"This event evolved after hearing of some other churches and groups having parties to celebrate the birth of Jesus," Susan Rhodes, one of the birthday party's coordinators, said. "The room depicted a party you may recall as a baby boomer — balloons tied with streamers extending outwards, party favors, punch and a huge birthday cake with the inscription, 'Happy Birthday, Jesus.'"

Neushaefer, who is in his first year as pastor at Concord, said he was impressed by the excitement of the children at the birthday party.

"To see the tremendous excitement on the part of the children and to know that they will remember this time, not by the usual distractions, but by what is most important, and in understanding what it means to have a true relationship with the living God," Neuschaefer said. "It renewed my spirit and made my Christmas."

Rhodes noted that, "instead of receiving presents [at the birthday

party], children brought mittens and hats for less fortunate children and placed them beneath the Christmas tree in the church fellowship hall.

"I have been richly blessed to be a part of the children's programs at Concord and I am really excited about our new tradition of celebrating Christmas at Concord," Rhodes added.

Prior to last year's birthday celebration for Jesus, members of Concord presented a play that depicted "all the earthly, commercial things that happen at Christmas — things we enjoy, but don't necessarily help us find the true meaning of this special time of year," Rhodes explained. "It was fitting that the social following the play that night be that very celebration — a birthday party for Jesus."

Earlier in 2009, Rena Morton, long-time director of Concord's adult choir and a former director of a children's choir at the church, was approached about the possibility of leading a children's music program again.

"Our children's population has grown quite a bit in the past three to four years," Morton said. [Church member] Elizabeth Carver had asked me several times to think about doing a children's music program," Morton continued. "What better time to get one started than around Christmas?"

Morton had eight children at her first practice. The number grew to 10 the following week and eventually to 12 with prospects for a few more children to join the group as well. Morton was assisted by Lisa Elliott and Elizabeth Bell.

Morton's love for music began when she was a youth at Antioch Baptist Church. "My mom spent \$25 to buy me a piano when I was 11," Morton said. "I know now that it was quite a

sacrifice for my parents to spend that money, but it gave me experiences that I would not have had.

"Music touches my soul," Morton continued. "It has given me joy through the years and has gotten me through some tough times. Sitting down at the piano and singing those good ol' gospel, Christian songs learned as a kid puts a smile on my face and lifts my spirits."

And, Morton hopes to pass that same love for music on to the children at Concord. "I hope that the children will develop a love for music and how music can make a difference in your life," Morton said. "It can give one the lift needed to get through a tough day. It can put a smile on your face and a tune in your heart."

The children's program Sunday and the birthday party for Jesus certainly put a smile on the face of Rev. Neuschaefer.

"I was so moved by their great witness," Neushaefer said of the production of "A Shepherd's Story." "Somehow as we age, we seem to lose that unbridled joy and enthusiasm. We begin to lose the mystery of life and the acceptance and welcoming of mystery. They gave so selflessly," Neuschaefer said of the children in the production. "Most adults are

ABOVE: Members of the children's choir at Concord UMC in Roxboro pose for a photo after their performance of "A Shepherd's Story." (Photo by Tim Chandler)

petrified to stand before an audience and perform, much less to stand at a microphone and speak. These children did that faithfully and did it well. As a pastor, I can't think of anything more important than leading our children in an understanding of truth as it relates to our faith."

Prior to the final song of A Shepherd's Story, Avery Bowman, one of the members of the children's choir, read the final portion of narration for the production.

"I was overwhelmed and humbled when Avery stood before us all and spoke with conviction about Jesus — the greatest gift ever given — and then offered anyone who didn't yet know Jesus to accept the gift and ask Him into their hearts," Neushaefer said. "Wow. Out of the mouths of children. Most adults are terrified to mention their faith, let alone to offer the gift of salvation."

* Tim Chandler is editor of the Person County Courier-Times. Article reprinted with permission.



Following the music program, the children enjoyed blowing on their noise-making party favors at Concord's birthday party for Jesus. (Photo by Tim Chandler)

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North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 155, No. 2

February 2010



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Hendricks retiring from Methodist University	3
NCC Haiti disaster response	5
Connectional Ministries staff re-alignment	6-7
March Bible Study	8
Camping Ministry Sunday	12

Dixon remembered for his life of compassion and service

By Ted Avery *

The Rev. Sam Dixon, whose life of compassion and service led him to Haiti to work for the welfare of the poor of that nation, was honored by family, friends and colleagues in a moving memorial service Jan. 22 at Edenton Street United Methodist Church in Raleigh.

Dixon, head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), died after the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti destroyed the Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince where he was meeting with a group of mission and relief specialists to plan improved health services there.

The Rev. Ned Hill, pastor of Edenton Street UMC presided over the service, calling it a time to celebrate the life of Sam Dixon.

In one of the Old Testament lessons, Bishop Joel Martinez, interim general secretary of Board of Global Ministries, described Dixon as someone who left "big, big shoes to fill. He was a man who didn't take himself very seriously but took his mission and work very, very seriously. Sam would be on the road somewhere today, probably in Haiti, if he hadn't been there at the beginning."

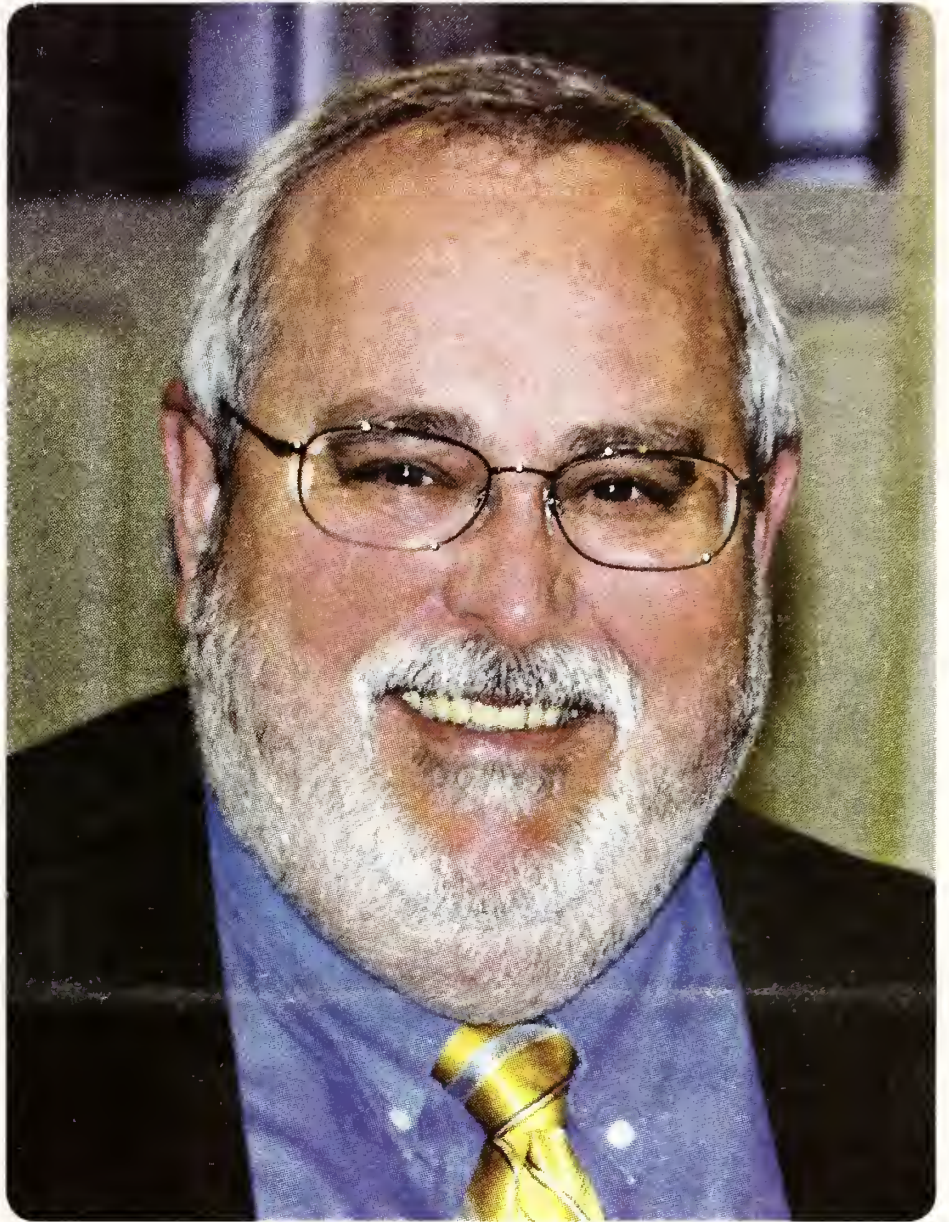
"His concern and compassion knew no bounds and race, country of origin, location or station in life never were a consideration in his thoughts. His message of hope and love will echo through the world for many years to come."

— Cashar Evans

In another Old Testament lesson, Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, said that Dixon's sense of passion for his faith and work engaged everyone in his presence.

In the Naming and Witness

See "Dixon remembered," page 4



Dr. Sam Dixon, head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and North Carolina Conference ordained Elder, died after the January 12 earthquake in Haiti destroyed the Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince. Dixon traveled to Haiti to meet with a group of mission and relief specialists planning improved health services in the country.

Hope for Haiti

North Carolina Conference Response Plan

A collaborative plan for response across the NC Conference to the recent Haiti disaster was developed by the District Mission Secretaries in mid-January. In consultation with Bishop Al Gwinn and the district superintendents, the plan has been offered for use by congregations so each congregation can move in a coordinated effort.

This is a plan for districts and local congregations. The Mission Team noted that if congregations are already collecting other needed supplies, such as medical supplies as previously requested, then these congregations should continue with those efforts. The complete plan, including detailed information on Food and Hygiene Kits, is available at <http://nccumc.org/missions/>.

Recommendations:

All districts promote the following Advance special giving opportunities:

- ♦ UMCOR: Haiti Disaster- Advance #418325 (Disaster

relief/response in Haiti.)

- ♦ NC Disaster Appeal—Conference Advance #S00096 (This will be used to assist covering shipping costs.)
- ♦ MERCI Mission Center - Conference Advance Special #S00136 (To operate MERCI as a shipping and coordination point.)

Six districts asked to collect food kits and six districts asked to collect hygiene kits. All districts asked to collect tarps and blankets.

- ♦ Districts collecting Personal Hygiene Kits: Burlington, Durham, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Goldsboro, Greenville.
- ♦ Districts collecting Food Kits: New Bern, Raleigh, Rockingham, Rocky Mount, Sanford, Wilmington.

Congregations will deliver kits to the District collection sites (to be determined by each district – a full list with operation times, points of contact, and contact

See "Hope for Haiti," page 5

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Giving for apportionments funds ministries and missions

During challenging economic times in 2009, 808 conference churches paid 91.85% of their apportionments. This payout represents a 1.31% decrease from 2008 payments.

"With the trying financial conditions that we faced together in 2009, we are grateful for all efforts to fund apportioned ministries. Whether that meant 100% or something less, please rejoice in the knowledge of the ministries and missions that this giving makes possible," said Christine Dodson, conference treasurer.

Of the 808 churches, 688 or 85% paid 100% and 120 paid less than 100%. Of these 120 churches, 24

paid more than 75%.

Looking at district figures, Fayetteville had an increase of 2.82% over 2008 payments, Rockingham payments increased by 3.69%, and Sanford increased by 6.63%. Showing slight increases or remaining relatively constant were Burlington, Durham, Goldsboro, and Rocky Mount.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration voted in a conference call to pay from reserves the difference to fund all six apportionments in full – paying out at 100% the General Church, Jurisdiction, and Board of Pension Past Service Liability.

Jones to become senior advisor for international strategy at Duke, Hays to serve as dean for two-year term

L. Gregory Jones, Dean of the Duke Divinity School since 1997, has been named senior advisor for international strategy effective March 1, and will step down as dean at the end of the academic year, Duke University President Richard H. Brodhead announced.

Richard Hays, the George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament at the Divinity School, will serve as dean for a two-year term while a national search is conducted for Jones' successor.

"Greg Jones is an exemplary citizen of Duke University," Brodhead said. "It's great news that he has agreed to take on this vital position. As Duke expands its global presence,



L. Gregory Jones



Richard Hays

the need for imaginative leadership and prudent judgment is essential."

Jones is an ordained United Methodist Minister in the Western NC Conference. He will continue to serve as a professor of theology.

Hays is an internationally recognized scholar of the letters of Paul

and on New Testament ethics, exploring innovative ways in which early Christian writers interpreted Israel's Scripture. His book *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* was selected by *Christianity Today* as one of the 100 most important religious books of the 20th century.

An ordained United Methodist minister, Hays has preached in settings ranging from rural Oklahoma churches to London's Westminster Abbey. In 1991, he came to Duke from the Yale Divinity School faculty in 1991 where he had received the M.Div. degree. He earned a Ph.D. at Emory University.



L-R: Pastor Jeff Davis, Rev. Pat Sykes (center) and Mrs. Jean Davis (Photo by Jim Mentzer)

Scholarship honors Jeff and Jean Davis for their years of ministry

By Jim Mentzer *

What do you give the pastor who turns 90 years old?

That was the question facing the family of Jefferson W. Davis recently as the retired local pastor from the

Sanford District approached his 90th birthday. Rather than a rocking chair or fancy watch, his family wanted to offer a gift that would have special meaning.

Their choice – creating a scholarship through United Methodist Foundation, Inc. honoring Jeff Davis and his wife, Jean, for their years of ministry service to the NC Annual Conference.

But this would be no ordinary scholarship program benefiting high school seniors moving on to college education.

Instead, the scholarship program will benefit pastors who are just beginning their ministerial careers in the conference yet are struggling to pay off student loans from divinity school on minimum salary wages.

According to Evelyn Davis Watson, his daughter, Rev. Davis began his ministry in 1956 as a second career after serving in the heating industry for many years.

"With a young family to care for, Dad worked hard to achieve the academic proficiency he needed to serve the people of his charges. We

See "Scholarship," page 3

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Methodist University president retiring in 27th year of service

By Maria Sikoryak-Robins *

Methodist University President Melvin Elton Hendricks announced in early January that he will retire from his position in July. He asked the Executive Committee of the Methodist University Board of Trustees to begin the search for a new president, indicating that he would remain in his position until July 1, unless the Board deemed it useful for him to stay longer.

"I delayed my retirement until our accreditation work was done," said Hendricks. All institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) are required to undergo a review for reaffirmation of accreditation every 10 years. The Commission reaffirmed Methodist University's accreditation last December.

"Now that MU is 'recommendation free,' I feel 'free to go.' The University needs a president who can envision programs, innovations, and financial campaigns of longer duration than is appropriate at my age. While the reputation and status of Methodist University are stronger than they have ever been, our long-term future is not guaranteed. Methodist University still needs creativity and innovation. New programs often require three to five years to mature. I am not at an age to provide that long-term leadership," he said.

Hendricks and his wife, Jerry, have three grown children and four grandchildren.

They currently reside on the Methodist University campus and are members of Hay Street UMC.

"This is a sad day for Methodist University, but a happy day for Dr. Hendricks and Jerry as they move forward into a new chapter of their



Melvin Elton Hendricks

life," said Harvey T. Wright II, chair of the Board of Trustees and a 1970 graduate of Methodist College. "Dr. Hendricks has led the University to a level of excellence and has never taken his eye off the mission of our University."

In 1983, when President Richard Pearce retired, the Trustees appointed Hendricks, academic dean at Randolph Macon College in Ashland, Va., to be the third president of Methodist University (then Methodist College). He assumed the presidency Sept. 15, 1983, and is the longest-seated president—now beginning his 27th year—at a private institution in North Carolina.

He is also a retired full elder in the North Carolina Conference. Hendricks holds a Ph.D. in physics from the University of South Carolina, a Master of Divinity from Duke University, and a bachelor's degree in history from Wofford College. He is also a graduate of Harvard University's Institute for Educational Management with a number of published articles about Methodism and physics.

Originally from Savannah, Ga., Dr. Hendricks started his career in the United States Navy as a naval flight officer. After serving his country, he

Methodist University - Then and Now

	Then - 1983	Now - 2009
Total Enrollment:	Fall '83: 771	Fall '09: 2,183
Day Enrollment:	771	1,658
Residential Enrollment:	248	949
Endowment:	\$1,262,818	\$15,033,751
Number of Employees:	110	545 (382 full-time, 163 part-time)
Operating Budget:	\$3,200,000	\$48,563,826
Academic Programs:	19 (with no concentrations)	Over 70 majors and concentrations

served a local congregation as their pastor, and then began his teaching career at Eisenhower College.

He has also taught at his alma mater, Wofford College, where he served as both the school's residence hall education program director and as director of Admissions.

He went on to become the academic dean of Randolph-Macon College. After serving briefly as acting president of Randolph-Macon College, he came to Methodist University as president.

"I will miss the relationship with the friends of Methodist University, many of whom became my personal

friends, especially the Board of Trustees, the faculty, the staff, the students, and the alumni," said Dr. Hendricks.

"I have been blessed at Methodist with wonderful colleagues and fellow workers. I have enjoyed and appreciated them. Any success of the University that has attended our years together has been the work of many good people. I have been a fortunate man indeed," said Dr. Hendricks. "I give thanks to God for placing me among such people."

* Maria Sikoryak-Robins is director of University Publications.

Scholarship honors Jeff Davis

Continued from page 2

struggled in those early days to maintain living expenses and family time together," said Watson.

Thus the Jeff & Jean Davis Scholarship was established by his family and friends to assist other pastors facing financial challenges while fulfilling the call God has placed upon their lives.

The first recipient of the new scholarship is the Rev. Pat Sykes of the Candor - Little River Charge (Sanford District). Sykes said it was "a wonderful surprise to receive this gift from the Davis family. It was both an opportunity and a challenge to go back to school later in life. On behalf of myself and my family, I

give glory to God and thank the Jeff Davis family for their care for older students."

The Davis Scholarship will rotate among the 12 districts of the NC Conference in years to come, starting with the Wilmington District in 2010, and continuing alphabetically.

Annually, the district superintendent will forward recommended applications to the scholarship committee, made up of representatives from the Foundation and the Davis family, for a final decision.

* The Rev. Jim Mentzer is director of Planned Giving for United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

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Dixon remembered for life of compassion and service from page 1

portion of the memorial, Cashar Evans, a conference layman and advocate for missions in the United States, said he once asked Dixon how he could stand sitting in an airplane for 16 or 18 hours on international flights. Dixon told him he didn't; he said he would get up and walk the aisles whenever he could. Consequently, Dixon "is well-trained and has experience walking in the clouds."

Evans said Dixon took the light of Christ throughout the world, "touching the least, the lost and the lonely." He said Dixon had a wonderful gift for sharing stories and preaching to groups. "When Sam engaged these people, he touched them and they weren't the same. If you seek Dixon's memorial, look around - that glitter, that twinkle in his eye is in everyone he touched."

In his address, the Rev. William C. Simpson, retired member of the NC Conference who has worked for the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), said he, Dixon and Cashar Evans were like brothers. He said Dixon always

taught the two of them to keep their eyes on the cross of Jesus Christ in whatever they did. Simpson described how Dixon's life exemplified the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 - love,

joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness.

Simpson also noted that Dixon died on the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Dr. King said the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy. I believe that fits Sam Dixon," Simpson said.

In the Witness of the Faith portion of the service, the Rev. James L. Gulley, retired missionary and consultant to the GBGM, said Dixon possessed a "can-do spirit that was undergirded by a gentle, kind spirit."

Gulley also recounted the harrowing 55 hours of being trapped in the rubble of the Hotel Montana with Dixon and four other colleagues.

The group spent that time praying and talking in an 8-ft. x 5 ft. x 3 ft. enclosure.

"Sam made each of us feel like we were the most important person in the world." Not only was Sam our pastor, but he was our friend. I have lost a dear friend."

Suetta Scarbrough
Member of First UMC,
Roanoke Rapids

"Sam put himself in harm's way often for the sake of a borderless mission to bring healing and hope to many on behalf of us all. His work made us a more faithful church and his sacrifice bears witness to our high calling. We know Sam's service represents the best we United Methodists offer up to God and out to a suffering world."

Neil Alexander,
President, United Methodist Publishing House

The time was "marked by a veritable roller-coaster of emotions - there were moments of hope, moments of anger, moments of humor, moments of despair." In his last hours, Dixon said, "Please tell my family that I love them," naming them one by one.

Gulley, the Rev. Clint Rabb and Dixon were meeting with other relief specialists when the hotel collapsed. Dixon was pinned under a concrete slab. Four of the colleagues were saved by rescuers but Rabb and Dixon died from injuries suffered in the collapse.

A North Carolina native, Dixon served as a pastor of congregations for 15 years, including churches in Sneads Ferry, Durham, Swepsonville, and Swansboro. From 1986 to 1987, he served as president of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. He was the director of missions and evangelism for the conference from 1990 to 1996.

Dixon was the pastor of the First UMC in Roanoke Rapids from 1996 to 1998.

In 1998, Dixon joined the UMCOR as an executive in the non-governmental organization (NGO).

He moved to the position of executive director of the United Methodist Development Fund in 2001.

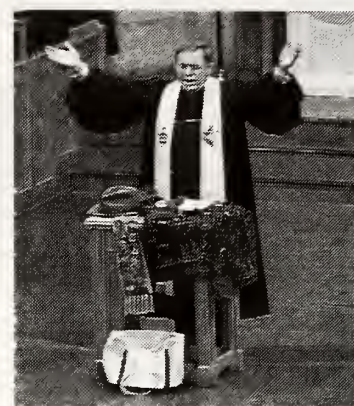
He became the Global Ministries' deputy general secretary of Evan-

gelization and Church Growth in 2003. Dixon assumed the leadership of UMCOR in 2007.

In the anniversary issue of *New World Outlook*, Global Ministries' mission magazine, Dixon described UMCOR as serving "God's creation on behalf of The United Methodist Church" and "providing help and

"As a wonderful leader, Sam also had a special quality to encourage his staff to do their best in a very gentle way. Sam will be greatly missed."

Jong Sung Kim,
Executive Secretary,
Asia Pacific Region
Mission Relationships
General Board
of Global Ministries



Bishop Al Gwinn closed the memorial service with a prayer. In front of the bishop is a display of items representing the life and ministry of Sam Dixon. Included in the display were an African shirt, a safari hat, a UNC-CH baseball cap, an UMCOR bag, and a woven stole showing children's faces from around the world. Dixon frequently wore the safari hat on mission trips.

hope to people in serious situations."

Messages of condolence can be sent to "Cindy Dixon and Family," General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 1400, New York, NY 10115.

Memorial gifts should be directed to the Haiti Relief Fund of UMCOR.

Make checks to UMCOR and note "Advance #418325 Dixon Memorial" in the memo line.

Checks can be placed in the church's offering plate or mailed to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New

York, NY 10087. Gifts can also be given online at umcorhaiti.org.

"The best way to honor and remember Sam is to do our best to help the people in Haiti," said Bishop Martinez.

** Ted Avery, a member of Bethesda UMC in Durham, is a freelance writer.*



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

L-R: At a temporary packing site, Jo Elaine Harris, Raleigh District director of Missions speaks to Helen Little, a dedicated mission volunteer who has traveled to Haiti 47 times. Little and a 13-member workteam were in Haiti when the earthquake struck. After three days of tending to the wounded with limited supplies, they flew to the U.S. on military transport.



Little's e-mail from Haiti began NC Conference response

By Jo Elaine Harris *

It started with an e-mail from Helen Little to her pastor, the Rev. Alan Swartz of Horne Memorial in Clayton. Little was in Haiti when the earthquake struck a devastating blow. She wrote, asking that specific supplies be sent quickly.

Within 18 hours of receiving the e-mail, Horne Memorial, along with the Raleigh District churches and MERCI, opened the doors of a warehouse in Clayton, owned by Bev and

Tommy Dew, to serve as the staging area to receive the variety of donated goods.

In just 11 days, over 52 tons of food, water, medical supplies and kits, blankets and tarps were prepared for shipment. Donations came from local hospitals, the General Assembly, Rotary, restaurants, stores, churches, and individuals.

A coalition of Horne Memorial, the Raleigh District, NC Conference Missions, Stop Hunger Now, private citizens, and the military worked together to share resources and knowledge in order to assure speedy delivery of the most urgently needed supplies.

Two days after the quake, the first of many private planes left the Johnston County Airport with medical supplies. Ships and planes loaded with supplies from the Conference and Stop Hunger Now have been to Haiti where organizations with which the conference is working have distributed them. Tons of additional supplies are in the pipeline.

The coordinated efforts in the conference are showing that there is no limit to what the Church can do.

The staging warehouse has moved to 1053 Whitaker Mill Road in Raleigh. It is owned by Trevor Spear of Hayes Barton UMC. Food, water, medical supplies and kits are being received there.

* The Rev. Jo Elaine Harris is director of Missions, Raleigh District of the North Carolina Conference - The UMC.

Volunteer locally or in Haiti for disaster recovery efforts

By Steve Taylor *

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) has established registration pages for those wishing to volunteer for United Methodist Volunteer in Mission (UMVIM) work in Haiti.

For short-term volunteers (staying one week-two months), the web site can be accessed at: <http://secure.gbvm-umc.org/HaitiVolunteer/>. The Haiti registration, previously done on the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) is being discontinued and all volunteers are asked to complete the new form.

Paulette West, executive director, UMVIM-SEJ, said, "On that page, you will find another form, this one more detailed, asking about specific skills and experience in Haiti; as the situation progresses and UMCOR has more time to assess the situation, we are learning more about the specific skill sets that are needed. If you have prior experience in Haiti and the necessary skills, it is very important that you fill out the form....from this new list we will make initial contacts."

Any questions should be addressed to jurisdictional UMVIM coordinators using the contact information below. Coordinators will contact volunteers when Haiti is again open and volunteers can be utilized. For the Southeastern Jurisdiction, contact Paulette West at 404-377-7424 or e-mail: sejinfo@umvim.org.

For individual long-term volunteers (two months-two years), register at www.individualvolunteers.info. Requests for Individual Volunteers will be made as recovery progresses. Training and experience working in disaster areas is beneficial. See the website for application, training, and assistance in placement.

UMCOR has created a position to liaison between United Methodist operations in Haiti and the enormous response of annual conferences and

congregations in the United States. As stated on the UMCOR Hotline, the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey will serve as Haiti relief liaison with conferences and volunteers.

There are immediate needs for volunteers to work at the MERCI Ministry Center in Goldsboro as members and congregations across the NC Conference collect hygiene kits and food for the earthquake victims. Register to help with MERCI by calling the MERCI Ministry Center at: 919-739-9167 or 888-440-9167. MERCI is located at 676 Community Dr., Goldsboro, NC 27530.

There is a continued need for funding. Gifts can be made to the following Advance specials. Place a donation in any United Methodist church offering plate in the conference. Be sure to include the Advance name and number on the memo line. 100% of any donation goes toward the ministry effort.

- ♦ UMCOR: Haiti Disaster-Advance #418325 (Disaster relief/response in Haiti.)
- ♦ NC Disaster Appeal—Conference Advance #S00096 (This will be used to assist in shipping costs)
- ♦ MERCI Mission Center - Conference Advance Special #S00136 (Operating MERCI as shipping/coordination point.)

Volunteers with special medical skills should complete the registration for GBGM but may also wish to register with the following Medical response NGOs. These organizations are matching skill sets with needs and locations: International Medical Corps - <http://imcworldwide.org> or 310-826-7800; Medical Teams International - <http://medicalteams.org> or 503-624-1000 (complete online application); Partners in Health - <http://pih.org> or 617-432-5300 (fax).

* Steve Taylor is serving as conference director of Missions.

Donations for Haiti

Cash donations made between Jan. 11-March 1 to charities specifically for Haiti earthquake relief can claim these donations on either their 2009 or the 2010 tax return, according to the Internal Revenue Service. This includes contributions made by text message, check, credit card or debit card.

Hope for Haiti

From page 1

information are available from each District Mission Secretary or District Office and posted on the Conference web site). Check with the Missions site for updates: <http://nccumc.org/missions/>. Districts will then deliver goods to the MERCI Center (<http://www.merciumc.org/>).

Volunteer teams from districts will sort and pack the donated kits. This process will be repeated twice more through February and March.

In addition to district level collections, Feb. 21 and March 21 will be conference-wide collection & celebration days.

Tentative plans in April & May call for moving into another hands-on ministry in preparing food kits through Stop Hunger Now. (Details will be announced when finalized.) A possible outreach project at Annual Conference is also being discussed.

Church Mice

Photo: United Methodist News Service



Karl Zorowski



Connectional Ministries staffing re-aligned for local church leadership development

By Bill Norton *

A new staffing ministry model aligned with current and developing local church needs was introduced to the North Carolina Conference Connectional Ministries staff on Wednesday, Jan. 6.

Five current staff positions were eliminated, effective Jan. 22, and four new ministry areas were introduced to more directly work with local congregations in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries, said the new ministry model is similar to the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) structure adopted in 2008 and is "locally focused with a high potential for transformational leadership development within local churches and communities."

"Change is difficult, especially when it involves persons you love and respect. The directors that are leaving have been wonderful servants of the church and the conference. We wish them well as they enter other areas of service," Goehring said.

Other conferences have experienced the elimination of staff positions. "The change for the NC Conference is driven by the need and desire to be strong advocates and supporters of local churches and their ministries and is not driven by current funding resources," said Rev. Goehring.

Staff positions eliminated were ministry directors for Hispanic/Latino; Christian Education, Archives and History, and Older Adult Ministries; Missions and Justice Ministries; Children, Youth and

Young Adult; and Multicultural. The director of Multicultural Ministries, who is under Episcopal appointment, will continue as a transition leader until Annual Conference in June when he plans to retire.

Severance packages were offered to staff who are immediately displaced.

The new ministry model has team coordinators for Leadership, Christian Formation, Outreach, and Stewardship. The coordinators will form a core team as Connectional Ministries staff for collaborative ministries for response to the needs of local churches.

According to a document explaining the change, the new ministry team coordinators will be expert facilitators, and coaches and mentors with some knowledge of the ministry areas, rather than being subject matter experts.

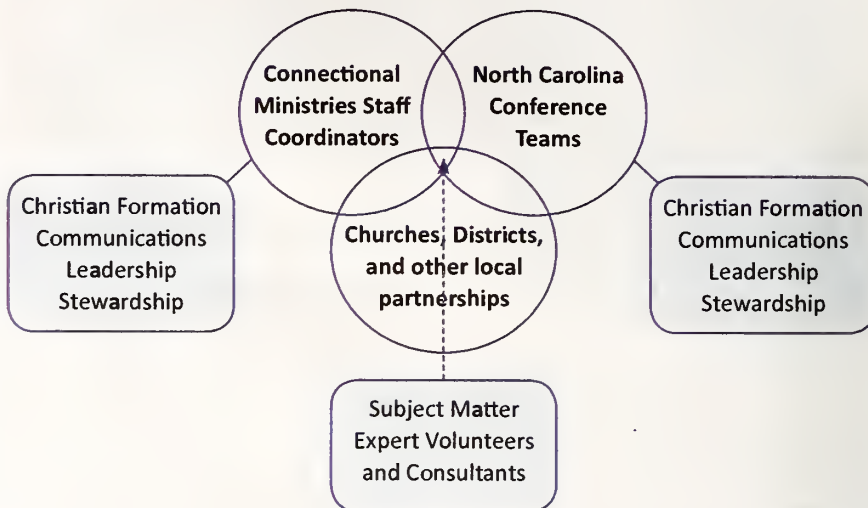
The current Communications area will become the fifth team for internal and external information sharing and web and video ministries. Under the current CCT structure, Communications is a part of each team, sharing information about the teams across the conference and providing other resources as needed. This team continues with its present staffing.

The executive director of Connectional Ministries will provide overall leadership for the teams and will serve as team coordinator for the Leadership Ministry Team.

Bishop Al Gwinn said the church has long known that its disciple making ministry must not change but how ministry is practiced must always be changing to address current realities.

"So it seems so appropriate that the Connectional Ministries Team

NC Conference Connectional Ministries Model



would seek to find more effective ways to resource our local congregations as they address current realities," he said.

Pointing out that the Council of Bishops and General Church's Connectional Table have called on the Church to concentrate on "disciple-making by focusing upon leadership, revitalization, new faith communities, global health and ministry with the poor," Bishop Gwinn said "our Connectional Ministries Table has structured itself into four teams—Leadership, Outreach, Spiritual Formation, and Stewardship" to help local churches be strong disciple-making centers."

"The action to staff according to this Connectional Table alignment will, in my opinion, assist the Table greatly as it seeks to assist our local congregations in becoming more vital and healthy in their ministries of radical hospitality, Spirit-filled worship, Spiritual formation, risk-taking ministries and mission to the world and extravagant generosity," Bishop Gwinn said.

"Often change is made even more difficult when it affects the lives of others. So this is a time when much prayer is needed – for those who must lead in the change, for those who are significantly affected by the change and all who are seeking to understand the change," he said.

Prior to the announcement, consultations were held with the Cabinet, executive committee of the CCT, and the Conference Personnel Committee. Administrative assistants continue in the new structure and will be assigned to work with a team coordinator.

For more information on these changes, see the document introducing the new staff structure, "Responding to Shifting World Realities: A New Ministry Model for the North Carolina Conference Connectional Ministries," Bishop Gwinn's statements and job descriptions which are available for download from the conference website.

* Bill Norton is conference communications director and Advocate editor.

NC Conference Connectional Ministries Staffing



Conference Youth Ministry

The NC Conference seeks "more people, more young people, and more diverse people" to become disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As the conference Connectional Ministries team is moving in new directions, and staffing changes will bring focus to the work of equipping churches for their mission, the conference does not anticipate a sweeping change or loss of youth events.

For many years conference youth events have provided an environment in which students can explore the questions of life and faith. Christians have been formed and leaders have emerged through these ministries, ready to serve the 21st century church. The vision for youth ministry in the conference continues with highly effective youth events. In addition, connecting with some new and some established ministries, not currently part of the conference program, will encourage spiritual formation for more young people and provide new outlets for service.

Transition of leadership for the events already scheduled for 2010 is occurring now. For questions about the events, see the "Transitional Contacts" listings on page 7.

New realities require new approaches to ministry

By Carol Goehring *

How can the church minister to a broken world increasingly indifferent or even hostile to faith? Recognizing that new realities require new approaches the NC Conference has embraced a new plan for organization of Connectional Ministries.

At a Ministry Summit held Jan. 19 involving the Conference Connectional Table (CCT), Board of Ordained Ministry, Conference Council on Finance and Administration and Ministry Cabinet a case for change was made:

- ♦ Lay members consistently say they feel ill-equipped for the challenge of making disciples in a culture skeptical of institutional church and faith perspectives.
- ♦ Congregations have not addressed fully their health,

in terms of their strength and witness in the community.

- ♦ Budgetary concerns caused by a decline in average worship attendance, a decrease in committed givers and tithers, especially among younger members, and increased investments in clergy care and retiree benefits.
 - ♦ Conference staff and leadership have not developed adequate structures or strategies to equip people for 21st century ministry.
- The new Connectional Ministries reorganization involves a realignment of staff so as to provide new approaches to equipping leaders and empowering congregations to make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ. Search teams are seeking persons with spiritual gifts and skill sets that include hospitality, prophetic voice, mercy, creativity, biblical knowledge

and dedication to spiritual practices that produce vital faith. Persons chosen for the new positions will work together as a team to develop models for equipping and empowering leaders of churches. New staff may be in place by July 1. Transition plans will cover operations while new staff is acclimated and can offer details about their ministry area.

Bishop Al Gwinn announced that planting new churches is a high priority and named Rev. Jeff Severt for the office of New Faith Communities.

Revitalization of existing churches, also a focus of the UMC, is now delegated to the office of Connectional

Ministries. The work of transforming existing congregations requires sustained effort over a longer period of time than is required for programming and will dictate better relationships with congregations along with changes resulting from development of teams in the local church and the district.

Connectional Ministries staff realignments will be implemented in accordance with the restructuring of the CCT approved by the 2008 Annual Conference.

The staffing of committees and

See "New approaches," page 9

Transitional contacts for some reorganized ministry areas

Contact information for continuing ministries affected by a staff reorganization in Connectional Ministries are listed below. In most cases, Robin Harry in Connectional Ministries (rharry@nccumc.org or 800-849-4433) will know the name of the contact person.

Media Center, Older Adult Ministry, Archives and History:

- ♦ Media Center — To secure media resources for your local church, please call Robin Harry at 800-849-4433.
- ♦ Older Adult Ministry — Questions should be directed to Robin Harry at the United Methodist Building (numbers above). The Rev. Mike Davis is the Older Adult Ministry Committee Chairperson.
- ♦ Archives and History — Contact Rev. Dennis Lamm, commission representative or Robin Harry

Children's Ministry:

- ♦ Children's Ministry Team Leader — Amy Staley, jarvisdcm@earthlink.net
- ♦ Children's Curriculum Resource Team Leader — Cynthia Powell, cdpowell@bellsouth.net
- ♦ Safe Sanctuaries Committee Chair — Dorothy Funkhouser, dorothy.funkhouser@haymountumc.com

Youth Ministry:

Robin Harry in Connectional Ministries (rharry@nccumc.org or 800-849-4433) knows contacts for youth events and handles registration.

- ♦ Youth Lay Speaker Training, Feb. 13 — Linda Harris & Robin Harry
- ♦ Confirmation Celebration, March 6 — Robin Harry will direct to the appropriate leader
- ♦ Global Vision Tour — Tom Pritchard and Dennis Peay
- ♦ Rally Day — Dennis Peay and Marty Cauley
- ♦ Appalachian Trail Hike — Mike Ellington
- ♦ Summer Breakaway — Ray Pearce
- ♦ ACS — Tom Pritchard
- ♦ Pilgrimage — Adam Seate and Jay Locklear (and more to be named)

Young Adult Ministry:

- ♦ Contact Carol Goehring at the United Methodist Building, 800-849-4433 or cgoehring@nccumc.org

Jeff Severt named director of New Faith Communities

The Rev. Jeff Severt, lead pastor at New Song Church in New Bern has been named director of New Faith Communities for the NC Conference, Bishop Al Gwinn has announced.

As director, Severt will utilize partnerships with congregations and the conference to launch new communities of faith for all people in all areas of the conference.

"Jeff has proven ability in equipping, encouraging, and empowering others through his effectiveness in founding a dynamic congregation in New Bern which has grown to over 700 in weekend worship," said Gwinn.

Previously, development of new communities and revitalization of existing congregations was the responsibility of Congregational Development.

Under a restructure of how these ministries are accomplished, New Faith Communities has the responsibility for new ministries and the Conference Connectional Ministries will be work with existing congregations on revitalization. The date Severt will begin his new appointment was not announced, pending the appointment of a new lead pastor at New Song.

Severt is noted for his unconventional approaches to ministry. He



Jeff Severt

has preached from the rooftop of the church, flown to an outdoor service on a helicopter, and conducted a wedding on the bottom of the Caribbean. During the past 12 years, he has worn a tie to church only three times. Severt has used his gifts in

music, art, drama and video editing creatively in his ministry. Geocaching, outdoor scavenger hunting using GPS coordinates, is included in his numerous interests.

Severt was ordained a Deacon in 1993, graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary in 1994 and was ordained an Elder in 1996. He began New Song in 1998.

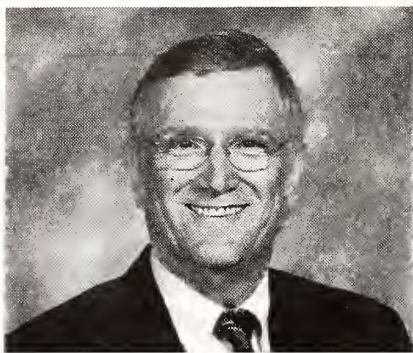
He has been a member of the Commission on Congregational Development and currently serves on the Board of Ordained Ministry. In 1997, he was presented the Denman Evangelism Award.

Severt has completed the Church Planting program at the National Institute for New Church Development and the Royce and Jane Reynolds Program for Church Leadership.

Jeff and his wife, Monica, have three children: daughter Callie, age 11, and three-year-old twins, son Spence and daughter Skylar. Monica is a public school teacher.

Conference office of Missions

Due to the need for a coordinated response to the Haiti disaster from the conference, Steve Taylor will continue to work in disaster response until Feb. 28. Previously the Director of Missions and Justice Ministry, Taylor was one of four whose positions were discontinued effective Jan. 22. He has coordinated disaster since the earthquake, establishing a plan for district efforts and working with medical, military and other humanitarian relief agencies to meet the needs of the victims.



March

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

March 7, 2010

Text: Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-9

"Mission to the Community"

The story of Jonah is one of the most familiar stories in the Old Testament. As I began studying it for this week's lesson, I got to thinking about one very small piece of the account, a portion that I have previously ignored: Amittai.

Amittai was Jonah's father (Jonah 1:1). Was he proud of his son? Was he embarrassed by his son's life as a prophet? Did he stay in touch with the travels of his son? How did he help to shape the faith of Jonah as a young boy? Why did he name his son "Jonah," a name that means "dove"?

Jonah grew up in Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25). That village was just a few miles north of Nazareth, (Some say that it exists today as the modern town of el-Meshed. Tour guides there will point out a tomb where they say Jonah is buried.) The name of the place means "wine press on the hill" or "wine press at the well," a lovely title that belies the rocky soil of the area.

So, Jonah, the world traveler to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3) and Ninevah

(Jonah 1:2), began his journey in a rather unlikely place with a mother whose name we do not even know and a father about whom we know next to nothing. How remarkable are the ways of God! The power of the prophet Jonah has emerged from a seemingly insignificant place with seemingly unremarkable parents. If ever one feels that God has little use for "the likes of me," one might well remember Amittai and Gath-hepher.

The name "Amittai" means "truth." That name adds an interesting twist to the story of Jonah: the "son of Truth" tries to run away from what the Lord wants (Jonah 1:3). "The son of Truth" is upset when God decides to forgive people Jonah does not like (Jonah 3:10-4:1). Perhaps Jonah lives out the line from the movie "A Few Good Men": "You can't handle the truth!"

Jonah's ministry was during the reign of King Jeroboam II (not exactly a paragon of virtue—2 Kings 14:24). God's call was for Jonah to go to Ninevah (modern day Iraq) to get an evil people to repent (Jonah 3:8). Jonah's roots were in non-noteworthy places among non-noteworthy people ("son of Amittai"). Even so, God is at work. And what do I learn from that?

What Someone Else Has Said:

James Harnish has written (*God*

Isn't Finished with Us Yet, Upper Room Books) "The same Spirit who called Jonah to go to Ninevah is still at work in human history to bring repentance and healing to broken relationships..."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Where do You send me?..."

March 14, 2010

Text: Jonah 3:10-4:5

"A Community to Redeem"

A few months ago I was worshiping during an Advent service and came across a wonderful, meaning-changing typographical error in the bulletin. The text was supposed to quote Romans 12:15 ("mourn with those who mourn..."); instead, the line read "morn with those who mourn." That's a powerful truth! To those who suffer, offer hope! To those who have not heard the good news, give them gospel! To those who hurt, offer healing! To those who mourn, offer the morning!

That is the gracious turn in the story of Jonah. The people of Ninevah have been a burned-out, spiritually empty, even evil people (Jonah 3:8). And here comes the prophet Jonah, warning them that God is going to doom them (3:4).

Amazingly, they hear the message and repent (3:8). And God forgives them (3:10). They are given the morning! And Jonah does not like it (4:1).

This new spirit, this gracious forgiveness, this holy new start did not fit Jonah's image of how things were

supposed to be.

It's hard, isn't it, when God likes someone we don't like? It's hard, isn't it, when God forgives someone at whom we are still angry? It's hard, isn't it, when God accepts someone we think is beyond acceptance?

But God works like that. This story is really about the action of God, more than being the work of Jonah.

The Hebrew verb *manah* shows up in the book of Jonah a number of times; it gets translated various ways at key points in the story, but always points to what God is doing: "the Lord *provided* a large fish" (1:17); "the Lord *appointed* a bush" (4:6); "the Lord *appointed* a worm" (4:7); "God *prepared* a sultry east wind" (4:8).

God will not be contained by our prejudices. God will not be contained by our limited love. God will not be blocked by our broken intent. God rejoiced (4:11) even though Jonah was bent out of shape (4:9).

That's the good news to those who mourn, who repent, who seek a new beginning. God is ready to love (4:2).

What Someone Else Has Said:

In commenting on the repentance of the people of Ninevah, Chrysostom (fourth and fifth century) wrote (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, InterVarsity Press): "(God) did not say simply that he saw their fasting and sackcloth and ashes, but their behavior. I say this not to question fasting (God forbid!) but to exhort you that with fasting you do that which is better than fasting, the abstaining from all evil."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your

See "Bible Study," page 9

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March adult Bible study *continued from page 8*

prayer begin: "Come into my heart, Lord..."

March 21, 2010

Text: Ruth 1:1-16

"Family as Community"

(1) With catalog in hand, I called the customer service number. I had a question about a product on page 40. The automated answering machine ("Press two for more options") could not help me. The first agent with whom I spoke was friendly and asked me to hold while he checked for more information. We got cut off before he returned. The second agent I reached said she could not answer my inquiry; she referred me to "technical services." The woman at "tech services" heard my question, pondered it a moment, and then said, "A friend of mine has one of those; here is how it works." She solved the issue (and I ordered two of the items).

(2) Missionary D. T. Niles said, "Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find food."

(3) Rep and I have seen each other once in the last forty-five years, but he is one of my very best friends. We roomed together in college for a couple of years, were in each other's wedding, and then traveled in different directions. Now he lives in Maine. I live in North Carolina. By e-mail and by telephone (unlimited

calling plan!), we are in touch a couple of times a week.

Each of these paragraphs (above) tells something about the nature of community. It can be formed by common concerns, mutual hunger, shared values, open introductions, or gift of relationship.

In this week's study text, Ruth and Naomi form a community to face uncertainty together (1:16). They form a community that accepts new relationships (1:16). They form a community that grew out of loss (1:3-5). They form a community that drew on memory (1:7).

In the midst of change, community is an important constant (Psalm 46:2-3). The relationships within community restate the relationships within the divine Trinity. When those relationships are broken, it once again breaks the image of God. The story of Ruth moves us to understand, to experience (as Charles Wesley says, "to know and to feel") how God meets us and shapes us in community. And that is good.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Learning the Way* (The Alban Institute), Cassandra D. Carkuff Williams has said: "Reclaiming the community of faith as the crucible for the formation of disciples is vital, for relationships in community mediate spiritual formation."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Merciful God, who lives in the community of the Holy Trinity, open my heart and being to community that enriches and that guides me closer to Your will..."

March 28, 2010

Text: Ruth 2:5-12; 3:9-11

"Acceptance in Community"

This lesson comes on the first day of Holy Week. The tumultuous events that changed the world lie ahead: our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, Jesus' Passover supper with the disciples, the betrayal, the trial, the crucifixion, the anguished emptiness, and the life-giving discovery that "He is not here; He is risen!"

These layers of life unfold in ways that at one time establish community and at another time deny community. The community of Jesus' friends welcomes him into Jerusalem.

The community of disciples gathers in the upper room for a meal together. As the accusations begin to fly against Jesus, the community begins to dissolve or hide.

Jesus dies with his shattered com-

munity able only to watch. Then, the power of the risen Lord reforms and reshapes the community from disbelief to celebration.

What a week!

The study text is not about the closing week of Jesus' life, but it is about community. Ruth leaves the community she has known (Ruth 1:22). She comes as a foreigner among a people who, at best, are suspicious of foreigners (Ruth 2:10).

But Boaz ignores customs and social pressures and accepts Ruth into the community of his caring (Ruth 2:14-16). Finally, Ruth and Boaz enter into the community of marriage (Ruth 4:13). And out of the community of their wedlock comes a son, Obed, the grandfather of King David (Ruth 4:17). This David is in the genealogical line of the Messiah (Matthew 1:6, 17), so we who are today the body of Christ suddenly recognize that the account of this community is the story of our own life, our own community!

Thanks be to God for the spiritual maturity of Boaz who accepted Ruth into community.

Has God tried to give such gifts to

us in our Christian community, only to find us saying "No" to some of God's children? What lines have we drawn around the inclusive love of God? To what extent do others feel welcomed to "glean in our spiritual fields"?

Some scholars think the Book of Ruth was God's inspiration to counter the closed understandings of another time in Israel's life (for example, Nehemiah 13:23-27). God does seem to keep tapping on the door until we open it.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Abingdon Press), Jung Young Lee has written: "Koinonia is not an exclusive community. It is an open-ended community, because God's love is open to all. It is an open invitation to all people because God loves everyone."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of all ages and of all places and of all people, as we see Jesus approaching Jerusalem, move in our hearts as we decide whether to shout 'Hosanna' or 'Crucify Him!'..."

Annual Conference resolutions, committee reports due in May

In preparation for Annual Conference, resolutions for 2010 must be submitted to the Conference Secretary's Office no later than May 10.

Reports from the committees, boards, and agencies are due no later

than May 1.

Submit reports electronically in MS Word format to smedlin@nccumc.org. Contact Shannon Medlin at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 222 if there are any questions.

New approaches to ministry *From pg. 7*

teams follows the plan for the Connectional Table. For example, all groups relating to the Committee on Education and Nurture will relate to the Christian Formation team and now to the Christian Formation coordinator. Conference youth events for this year will go on as scheduled with the help of leaders named for this transition period.

Events for 2011 also will be planned and implemented with the new staff leadership.

God-sized dreams for United Methodists include:

- ♦ Reversing the decline of youth and young adult participation in the life of the church.
- ♦ Increasing the numbers of believers deployed for mission in the community and the world.
- ♦ Providing a path for Christian formation that includes

opportunities of Conference programming, local mentoring and agencies beyond the church.

The new approaches being implemented will require vision, patience, flexibility, intentionality and faith, but if implemented successfully will help the North Carolina Conference transform communities and the culture through "healthy congregations and effective leaders making disciples of Jesus Christ."

* The Rev. Carol Goehring is executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries.

DEATHS

BURNSIDE, Hobart (Goldsboro: retired) died Jan. 11.

The funeral was held Jan. 15 at Fellowship UMC.

MAYO, Leonard (Rockingham: retired) died on Jan. 13. The funeral was held Jan. 15 at Rockingham: First UMC.

DIXON, Samuel W., Jr. (Rocky Mount: extension ministry) died in Haiti following an earthquake Jan. 12. A memorial service was held Jan. 21 at First UMC: Roanoke Rapids and a Service of Death and Resurrection was held Jan. 22 at Edenton Street UMC.

ANDREWS, Nancy, wife of Rev. John Andrews (Goldsboro: retired) died on Jan. 17. Funeral services were held on Jan. 20 at Magnolia UMC.

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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

NCC confirmation celebration

The NCC Confirmation Celebration is Saturday, March 6 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Registration begins at 10 a.m. and the program at 10:30 a.m. Membership covenant vows are the focus. Lunch is included. The service project is Operation Sharehouse with Stop Hunger Now. Bishop Gwinn will share with the confirmands and preside at Holy Communion. Groups planning to attend must pre-register by Monday, Feb. 22. The cost is \$15 per person (covers lunch and a portion of the shipping costs for the Stop Hunger Now service project). Registration form is at www.nccumc.org/youth.

Confirmation retreat

The Confirmation Retreat at Chestnut Ridge will be Feb. 26-28. Topics include baptism, scripture, service, worship, Methodism, and Christian life. Activities include worship, small group break-out sessions, stole making, music, service and traditional camp fun (campfires, smores, canoeing). Cost for the event is \$80 per participant, which covers 2 nights of lodging, 4 meals (all 3 meals Saturday and breakfast Sunday), and program materials. Churches are asked to provide one adult chaperone per six confirmands. For questions and to register, email rhonda@campchestnutridge.org.

Duke Endowment scholarship aid for confirmation weekends

The Duke Endowment has given permission to The Intentional Growth Center at Lake Junaluska to provide scholarship aid to churches identified as "North Carolina Rural" for Confirmation Retreat Weekends at 50% of the program fee. The weekends, with the theme "I Promise," are scheduled in March, April and November. Speakers, music, and presentations focus on the membership vows of "prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness." For details, visit <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/confirmation.aspx> or call 800-482-1442. These funds are awarded on a first come, first served basis.

Upcoming lay speaker training events and contacts

Lay speaker trainings have been scheduled in the NC Conference as follows:

- ♦ Raleigh District, 2/20, Advanced Training, please call the District Office 919-834-5100 to register.
- ♦ Rocky Mount District, 4/17, Basic Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472 to register.
- ♦ Rocky Mount District, 5/1, Advanced Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472/236-5490 to register.
- ♦ Burlington District, 5/21, Advanced Training, call Bonnie Francis - 336-449-9636 to register.

Treasurer training video available

Videos and presentation handouts from the Local Church Treasurer and Finance Committee training event offered recently are available at <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/treasurer-training-video-resource-available/>. The training event covered fraud survey findings and local church minimum internal control recommendations and also included a question and answer time and

a discussion of stewardship best practices. With changes to the *Book of Discipline, 2008*, Finance Committees are now required to have written financial policies documenting the internal controls for the church. As part of the presentation handouts, a sample financial policy document is available as well as an in depth publication on church audit requirements.

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MHC Sunday is Feb. 21

Help make a difference in the world...one child at a time. Throughout the month of February, participate in Methodist Home for Children Sunday, by inviting a MHC representative to speak to congregations and help support MHC's services to children, youth and families through a special offering. Contributions help clothe, feed and provide for children and provide support to foster and adoptive parents who offer safe and loving homes for children all over North Carolina. For more information, contact Jennifer Cooper at (919) 754-3625 or jcooper@mhfc.org.

ZOE Ministry hosts two events Friday, Mar. 19 at Duke

ZOE Ministry will host a symposium featuring teacher, author, and United Methodist pastor the Rev. Shane Stanford at 3:30 p.m. and an Evening with Kay Warren 7:30 p.m., both on Friday, March 19 at Duke University in Durham.

Rev. Stanford will be in Durham to speak about his journey as an HIV+ hemophiliac and Christian minister and to introduce Kay Warren during the evening event.

Warren, an accomplished writer and author, will share her work persons infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. She and her husband, Rick, are widely recognized for starting Saddleback Church and many initiatives that minister to people in need.

Complete details about for both events are available at www.zoeministry.org.

Global Vision registrations due

The deadline for high school youth to register for Global Vision - a study seminar in Washington, DC and New York City with the United Methodist Seminar Office of National and International Affairs is Jan. 19. The registration form is found in the 2010 Youth Events brochure available online at www.nccumc.org/youth. Global Vision takes place March 16-21.

Clergy Spouses' Day Apart

A Spouses' Day Apart will be held on April 24 at the First UMC in Nashville, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Margaret Therkelsen, a well-known person of prayer and faith, speaker and author, will be the keynote speaker. The cost of \$20 will include lunch and snack breaks. Childcare will be provided. For information and a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/events/csdp/>.

Partners in Health and Wholeness

Faith and Health Summit

The NC Council of Churches' Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW) Program is holding a Faith and Health Summit on Tuesday, Mar. 23 at First Baptist Church (Wilmington Street, Raleigh) 9am-4pm. Details and registration are available online at http://www.nccouncilofchurches.org/areasofwork/issues/health_care/registration_2010_summit.html.

Congregational Health Certification

By participating in the PHW Health Certification Program, congregations demonstrate that the human body is God's temple. To be recognized as a PHW Bronze Congregation at the Faith and Health Summit, congregations must complete the following three activities by Mar. 1: Identify a health activities contact person within the congregation; Make all buildings tobacco-free; and Serve healthier food options at events. Register the congregation online at <http://www.nccouncilofchurches.org> and follow the link from the home page. Registration for the PHW Health Certification Program completed after March 1 will be recognized at future events.

around the CONFERENCE



Galloway named Musical Director of Lake Junaluska Singers

Dr. Melodie G. Galloway, assistant professor of music at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, was recently named the new musical director for the Lake Junaluska Singers (LJS). "Directing the Junaluska Singers represents a lifelong dream for me. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with this premiere ensemble and carry on the Singers' and Dr. Draper's incredible legacy of ministry and outreach through inspired, beautiful choral music," said Galloway. She holds a Master's degree from Florida State University in Vocal Performance and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of Greensboro. Her experience as a conductor and soprano soloist includes opera, oratorio, musical theatre, and a professional vocal ensemble. In addition for singing for several seasons with the Lake Junaluska Singers, Dr. Galloway has also served as a LJS accompanist, soloist, choreographer, and as the agent for orchestra personnel for LJS concerts. At UNC-A, she directs the University Singers, the Chamber Singers, and Studio 18 - an advanced vocal jazz ensemble, and she is the Coordinator of Vocal Studies.



Bethel UMC holds Haiti benefit dinner

Bethel UMC (Bethel-Lebanon Charge, Wilmington District) held a fried chicken dinner on January 24 to benefit the earthquake victims in Haiti. The event was open to the public and raised over \$2000 for the relief efforts of UMCOR.



First UMC, Morehead City celebrates 130th anniversary

Dr. Billy Seate, pastor of First UMC in Morehead City, and NC Conference Bishop Al Gwinn enjoy FUMC's 130th anniversary celebration. The congregation celebrated being on the same plot of land for 130 years during the weekend of Nov. 21-22. On Saturday afternoon, Nov. 21, there was a panel discussion of historical moments concerning FUMC and character portrayals of people of historical importance. The afternoon included the official naming and dedication of the Charles S. Wallace Education Building and the Bridges Arendell Building. A plaque was unveiled for each of these buildings and family members were present. On Sunday, Nov. 22, the celebration continued with Bishop Gwinn preaching at the morning worship service.

conference CALENDAR

February

- 5 Resource Extravaganza
10am-8pm, UM Building
- 6 Resource Extravaganza
10am-5pm, UM Building
- 13 Youth Lay Speaker Training
- 17 Ash Wednesday
- 21 Methodist Home for
Children Sunday
- 22 Conference Connectional
Table Meeting
- 23-25 Children's Ministry FORUM,
Edenton St. UMC, Raleigh
- 26 Board of Higher Education
and Campus Ministry
Meeting
- 26-27 UMW Conference 39 &
Under Event, St. Luke UMC,
Sanford
- 28 Camping Ministry Sunday

March

- 2 Leadership Academy
Days of Learning, Edenton
Street UMC, Raleigh
- 6 Conference Confirmation
Celebration, Methodist
University
- 14 One Great Hour of Sharing
Sunday
- 16 - 21 Global Vision for Youth
- 23 CJAMM Meeting. 10am,
UM Building
- 28 Palm/Passion Sunday

NC Conference events
are available online at
www.nccumc.org/calendar

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Reconnect with God's creation through Camping Ministry; celebrate Camp Sunday

Every day, young people across North Carolina spend hours indoors in front of a television, computer or video game.

Dedicated to reversing this trend, Camps Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish seek to transform former couch potatoes into active participants in God's natural world.

At camp, the connections made are not via the Internet; they are with nature, God, and one another.

Camp Sunday on Feb. 28, or another appropriate Sunday, is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways camping and retreat ministries are "Forming the Inside, Outside."

"Camp is the best...I can be myself, play, and learn about God in one week set apart for me and my friends," says Katie about her time spent at camp.

All churches of the NC Conference can help ensure that those who desire to attend camp are able to do so.

The Rev. Ray Gooch, pastor of Brown's Chapel UMC, Pittsboro Circuit writes: "Each year our congregation makes a commitment that any child or youth wishing to attend camp can do so on a full Campership paid by the church. Whenever a child or youth returns from camp and shares the story of their camp experience, our church always benefits from their growth and joy. Each camper returns with a sense of greater self confidence and worth, a new appreciation for the presence and gifts of God in nature, with new friends, and more mentors and guides. I recommend this ministry to churches of any size. We are a church of about 80 persons now. Any congregation can 'afford' to send their children to camp when you see the benefits."

The NC Conference has three camps offering opportunities to reconnect outdoors.

Each camp has the common resources of outdoor setting, cabins, gathering spaces, campfires, and excellent food, yet each has its own distinct focus.

At Camp Chestnut Ridge (www.campchestnutridge.org) near Efland, horseback riding, community gardening and ecological stewardship bring depth to the natural experience.

At Camp Don Lee (www.donlee-center.org) in Arapahoe, sailing and marine science are central to the camp's offerings.

At Camp Rockfish (www.camprockfish.org) near Fayetteville, guests can experience high adventure or enjoy the more refined

retreat experience of the Bergland Retreat Center.

While Summer 2010 registration is now open, the offerings of Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish continue year-round with special programs for families, seniors, youth groups, school groups, church groups and retreat participants.

Camp Sunday can be celebrated by asking a child, youth or an adult who has been to camp to share their experiences.

In this time of financial challenges comes an opportunity to offer the camping experience through donations to the Myra Morris Campership

Fund. Camp Sunday is an occasion to raise awareness of this fund, created to honor Morris' dedication to camping ministry.

Camperships give financial assistance to families who could not otherwise afford to send their children to summer camp. To make a gift to the Campership Fund or to request a camp representative to participate in the Camp Sunday worship service, please contact Dail Ballard by email: dail@ncumcamps.org.



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- ✓ Have you documented your charitable wishes and bequests through your will?

Leaving an up-to-date and valid will is one of the greatest gifts any adult can give family members.



To learn more about bequests, contact the Rev. James Mentzer, Director of Planned Giving. Please call 1-800-555-4718, or e-mail jmentzer@nccumc.org.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NC Conference Leadership Summit	3
Fair trade coffee supports NCC camps.	6
Focus: Hope for Haiti	7-10
Conference UM Men's Rally	11
April Bible Study	12



Connectional Ministries staffing plan is refined

At a meeting on Feb. 22, the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) reviewed the proposal for staff reorganization and raised questions about some aspects of the plan.

The proposal calls for four staff leaders to function as a team to resource local churches in becoming "healthy congregations . . . making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The four staff positions in the original proposal align with the four teams of the Connectional Table structure. New positions created in the plan are Christian Formation Team Coordinator, Outreach Team Coordinator, and Stewardship Team Coordinator. The Leadership Team would be added to the role of the executive director of Connectional Ministries and would not create an opening for employment. The CCT expressed concern that no one was specifically designated to lead or oversee the work of church revitalization.

Bishop Al Gwinn and CCT Chairperson Emily Innes reflected on the concerns with Executive Director of Connectional Ministries Carol Goehring. Together these members of the Connectional Table recommend a refined proposal for staffing.

The new plan does not change the number of persons to be hired. It does not change the financial commitment of the North Carolina Con-

See "NC Conference," page 8

See "Connectional Ministries," page 2

Districts respond with donations, workdays at MERCI Center warehouse in Goldsboro

By Winkie Lee *

When Haiti was destroyed by a catastrophic earthquake, officials at the NC Conference realized that it would not be long before church members would begin offering assistance. Their desire to act – and act quickly – had been seen during Hurricane Floyd, the Indian Ocean tsunami and after other disasters that

had cost people their homes, their health and their lives.

The question facing the church was, how could it best organize and use this outpouring of love and labor?

"Whenever you have something like this happen, you have an initial surge of interest, willingness and energy," Charlie Gray said following a day of packing and shipping supplies from the MERCI Center in Goldsboro

to Haiti. Gray is president of Banded Brothers, the managing partner of the MERCI Center. He was one of more than 300 volunteers participating in a workday on Saturday, Feb. 6, at the MERCI warehouse.

Four districts worked together that day: Goldsboro, Rocky Mount,

Taylor is named NCC Outreach Team Coordinator

The Connectional Ministries staff begins taking shape as the position of Outreach Team Coordinator is filled. Steve Taylor, former conference director of missions, is named to the new role.

"Taylor's experience as a leader in the North Carolina Conference, especially in mission development and teaching in the local church, qualifies him for the new position. He brings skills as a facilitator, coach, mentor, and evaluator – skills already tested in local congregations, districts, church agencies and volunteer teams," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive

director of Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

"With a passion for Christ-like service and ministry with the poor, Taylor envisions a church that worships and reaches into the world 'to proclaim life and bring hope.' Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is the mission of the church, and Taylor shares the concern for the church's witness and work," Goehring said.

In a reorganization of the Conference Connectional Ministries staff in early January, four positions were eliminated. The mission director posi-

tion Taylor lead was one of those four.

With the attention required to coordinate relief efforts for earthquake-stricken Haiti, Taylor's service in the NC Conference was extended beyond Jan. 22, when other staff positions were discontinued.

Interviews began in February for the Outreach Team Coordinator and the conclusion of that process allows Taylor to continue with uninterrupted service in the Connectional Ministries staff.

However, the role of Outreach

See "Taylor named," page 2

Connectional Ministries staffing plan is refined continued from page 1

ference. It creates a new position of Leadership Team Coordinator and transfers church revitalization to the portfolio of the executive director who will continue to direct the Connectional Ministries Staff and

conference ministries.

The staff position of Stewardship Team Coordinator will not be filled. Conference Treasurer Christine Dodson has been the staff leader for the Stewardship Team and will con-

tinue in that support role.

The Christian Formation Team Coordinator position is yet to be filled, although a search team is working on this. The Outreach Team Coordinator is now filled. The Leadership Team Coordinator position is announced and the job description is posted on the Conference website and other sites until March 20. The fourth team member is the Executive Director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

"We are reorganizing to direct more of the resources of the Conference to the local church, to provide support for transformation of existing congregations. The model is the best we could envision, and we remain committed to the vision of 'healthy congregations and effective

leaders making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," said Carol Goehring.

"This is, however, an adaptive situation. We are refining the proposal after listening to the collective wisdom of the Conference leaders," she said.

Rev. Carol Goehring calls the process of change and the realignment of staff "fluid," allowing for individual skill sets and spiritual gifts to influence the team's capacity to effect positive outcomes.

"It is not possible to anticipate every detail of the new model for Connectional Ministries, but we believe God is in the plans we are developing and will lead us into a new day in the North Carolina Conference," Goehring said.

Young clergywomen blaze new trails, inspire next generation of girls

By Maria Mallory White *

After a recent worship service at Branches UMC in Florida City, Fla., the Rev. Audrey B. Warren returned to the sanctuary to turn off the lights.

There, draped in Warren's stole and with the microphone in hand, was 4-year-old Cassandra.

"I didn't catch what she was saying, but I have to believe that she was 'playing pastor,'" Warren recalls. "If that is not progress...I don't know what is. How amazing

for young girls to dream of being pastors."

At 26, Warren herself belongs to a distinct minority: young women who are lead pastors.

Reflecting a hopeful trend, these clergywomen—navigating denominational bias, interpreting the biblical role of women, and resisting age- and gender-based stereotypes—are leading

churches.

In the process, they are swimming

See "Young clergywomen," page 5



Warren and Cassandra

MFSA



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**Co-Sponsors: Kay Crum, Avent Ferry UMC,
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Taylor named coordinator from page 1

Team Coordinator brings new expectations and requires the surrender of some former responsibilities.

Interviews continue for the other Connectional Ministries team coordinators: Christian Formation, and Leadership. A part-time position for Media Center librarian is also in the interview process.

Under the reorganization model, the team coordinators will work as a team and will focus on church revitalization through coaching, assessment, vision-discernment and strategic planning for ministry.

"It is a pleasure to welcome Steve Taylor to the Connectional Ministries team. He provides some continuity in the mission and outreach of the Conference and he brings a collaborative style of leadership for the work

of transforming existing congregations," Goehring said.



Steve Taylor

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Leadership Summit seeks to support common vision of NC Conference

Conference leadership from various boards and committees met on Jan. 20 at Garner UMC for a Leadership Summit. The meeting included the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, Connectional Table, Board of Ordained Ministry and Ministry Cabinet.

The purpose of the day was to begin dialogue between the groups on the pressures facing each group and how the groups might best work together to support the common vision of the conference.

Participants sat in table groups and each group was asked to name the top three priorities or concerns for the NC Conference. Priorities listed the greatest number of times were: membership decline, clergy training needs, leadership effectiveness, and observed loss of passion for making disciples in both clergy and lay local church leaders.

Each group was then asked to brainstorm on how to move forward in addressing the top priorities. The gathering ended after each group developed specific plans for addressing the named priorities. Following are the reported plans:

- Ministry Cabinet – work intentionally to be more supportive and candid in the assessment and appointive processes. Focus on

interim appointments and naming pastors especially gifted for interim appointments.

- Connectional Table – work through the Connectional Table and districts to assist with interpreting the mission of the conference and work during the budget development process to help address the items such as pension and benefit funding that are major areas of concern.

- Council on Finance and Administration – develop visioning time to guide the work of CFA in the mission of the conference and take the lead in developing a leadership team of members from all groups present at the summit to continue dialogue of partnership between the groups.

- Board of Ordained Ministry – work with the Cabinet for open assessments for candidates for ministry. Be intentional with focused efforts on clergy training and development and work proactively to foster open communication and transparency.

To close the Leadership Summit, Bishop Al Gwinn encouraged participants to not let the momentum of the day end and to continue thinking of ways each group can support and help to interpret the work of the other groups.



NC Conference Board of Institutions elects new chair, vice chair, and secretary

Recently elected officers for the Board of Institutions (BI) are (L-R) Wilson Hayman, vice chair; the Rev. Gayla Collins, secretary; and Charles Foskey, chair. Hayman, conference chancellor, is a member of Hayes Barton UMC in Raleigh, Collins is pastor of Hertford UMC, and Foskey, a retired administrator at the UNC School of Medicine, is a member of University UMC in Chapel Hill.

The Board of Institutions was created by the Annual Conference in 1993 to monitor the historic relationship, legal and fiscal, between the Conference and eight institutions related by faith.

The institutions include: Methodist University, Louisburg College, NC Wesleyan College, United Methodist Foundation, Inc., NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc., United Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc., Methodist Home for Children, Inc., and Asbury Homes.



The Rev. Alan Sasser (standing), pastor of Davis Street UMC in Burlington, discusses one of the Leadership Summit topics. (Photo by Bill Norton)

New restrictions on microphones

As of June 12, churches will no longer be allowed to use wireless microphones, in-ear monitors, and intercom systems operating in the 700MHz range (698-806 MHz).

According to a rule enacted by the Federal Communications Commission, churches must stop using wireless devices in that range perma-

nently as of that date. Not all wireless microphones operate in that range.

Churches are encouraged to check their wireless equipment. Anything operating in the restricted range has to be replaced.

Information from the FCC website is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/>.

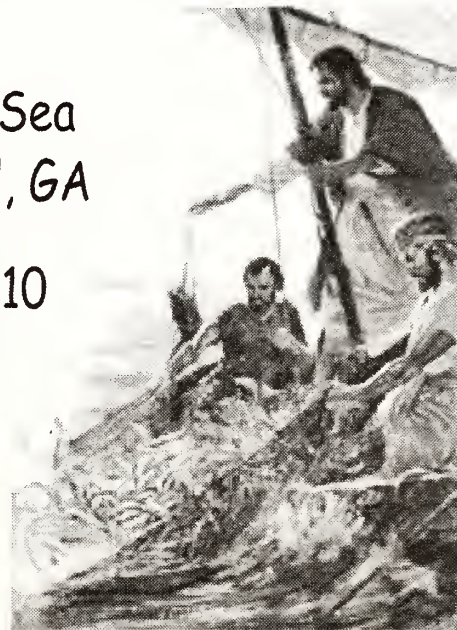
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letter to the EDITOR

The recent elimination of conference connectional ministries staff positions, for the purpose of connectional ministries realignment, has generated deep concern across the conference. There has also been much pain experienced in recent weeks--by those who had their positions terminated, by those affected by the loss of their leaders, and by those who were behind the decision and now feel the brunt of the resulting criticism.

What we seek is a simple, truthful accounting that separates facts from gossip and that responds to questions that are now unanswered. What was the process behind making this decision? Who made the decision to eliminate the positions in 16 days, and why? Was there another way this should have been handled? What are the best practices, including even Christian virtues, in handling a situation such as this?

The United Methodist Church, contrary to the belief of some, is democratic in polity—under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Annual Conference and charge conference act as checks and balances on the power of the bishop and the pastor. The laity have the power of the vote and of the purse.

Our church's democratic structure, plus its ideals of servant leadership and transparency, mandate an end to the current silence from the conference office. Conference leaders owe the United Methodists of eastern North Carolina, laity and clergy, responses to the questions at hand.

In Christ,
Mr. Henry C. Jarrett, Raleigh
The Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Morehead City.

Council of Bishops' pastoral letter on creation crisis

"God's creation is in crisis and we cannot remain silent while God's people and God's planet suffer," the Bishops of The United Methodist Church have said in a pastoral letter called "God's Renewal Creation: A Call to Hope and Action."

The Bishops further said that "we cannot help the world until we change our way of being in it." A "Foundation Document" was also issued with the Pastoral Letter.

The Bishops are suggesting that the "Pastoral Letter" or the "Pastoral in Liturgical Setting" could be read during a service of worship or a large gathering.

Another suggestion is to use the six-session study guides prepared for group leaders of adults and young people and for three sessions for teachers of children.

Possibly using these studies during Lent would be appropriate but another time may also be appropriate. The study guides are available from Cokesbury.

The "Pastoral Letter," "Pastoral Letter in Liturgical Setting," and "Foundation Document" can be downloaded from the following link (most documents are available in English, Spanish, and Korean): <http://nccumc.org/bishop/g-r-c/>.

Spiritual and physical wellness programs offered to churches

The relationship of mind, body and spirit calls for whole-person care of people of all ages.

Through a grant from The Duke Endowment, the NC Conference Office of Connectional Ministries offers a number of wellness programs led by Alyson Breisch, RN for local churches and districts.

Benefits to participants may be physical, social and spiritual as Breisch uses creative and interactive methods in the presentation and bases the content on scripture and the care of bodies and relationships. In some cases the programs target the "health" of the church.

- ♦ **Beckoning Door:** assesses the church's hospitality and health quotient, inviting members of the congregation into new ways of seeing the space, facilities and communications of the local church. The workshop is ideal for several congregations to engage in together.
- ♦ **Health Literacy:** A 12% "health literacy" rate among adults of all education and socio-economic levels is improved through this workshop. Participants are introduced to advance directives and health advocacy to assure appropriate care in a visit to the doctor or hospital.
- ♦ **Sacred Kitchen:** Healthy eating is possible anywhere. Learn how to modify recipes, how to order from a menu and the benefits of

buying local, seasonal produce.

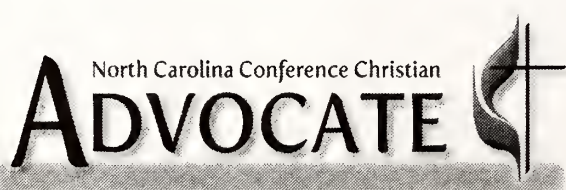
- ♦ **Walking Program:** This creative program integrates biblical images, principles and stories and the practices that contribute to wellness.
- ♦ **Sabbath:** Based on Marva Dawn's book, *Keeping Sabbath Wholly*, the emphasis on Sabbath brings clergy and laity to recognize the need for restoration, renewal and refreshment..
- ♦ **Spiritual Journaling and Life Review:** is a way of valuing the persons and the experiences of members of our congregations. Groups of 12-14 senior adults, or families affected by a special needs child or persons in recovery from addiction, are examples of the possible target populations to consider for this process.
- ♦ **Parish Nurse:** Alyson Breisch is leading a Parish Nurse Preparation course in conjunction with Moses Cone Hospital. An overview was held March 6, and the training is set for March 18-21 (the training) at Caraway Center near Asheboro. Registration costs are the responsibility of participants; scholarship assistance is available from NCC Connectional Ministries.

To schedule or to inquire about any of the wellness programs above, contact Breisch by email at alyson.breisch@gmail.com.

"Thank you" to conference for paying apportionments says GCFA letter

"The opportunity to say "thank you" to the people of the North Carolina Conference is an honor," said A. Moses Kumar, general secretary and treasurer for the General Council on Finance and Administration, wrote in a recent letter to Bishop Al Gwinn.

"Your faithful ministry of giving 100% to the apportioned funds in 2009 impacts lives and helps continue the global ministries of The United Methodist Church. To God be the glory. Thank you and God bless you," Kumar wrote.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

New church-wide focus on sharing ideas and resources related to Youth and Young Adult Ministries

By Tom Gillem *

Youth and young adult ministries at United Methodist churches across the United States will gain more immediate access to support and resources with a new effort aimed at helping local churches share their best expertise.

Church leaders with successful programs and ministry skills will be sought out in each jurisdiction to serve as resources for others who need their support, says Rev. Michael Ratliff, associate general secretary of the Young People's Ministries (YPM), a division of The General Board of Discipleship.

"We want to find people who are already established in the jurisdictions of the church, who already have a track record in relation to young people's ministries, and have the abilities to work with established organizational structures to help us relate to people at every level of the church," Ratliff says.

A part-time YPM staff member is being hired in all five jurisdictions to help make the local resources more accessible. "We, as a general agency of the church, are trying to make a difference in what is happening in local congregations, but there are a lot of levels of the church between us and a local congregation," Ratliff says, adding that the YPM wants to provide more direct assistance to local ministries by marshalling existing local resources.

Carl Thomas Stroud Gladstone, working in Detroit with the North-Central Jurisdiction, is the first part-time YPM staff member working on a jurisdictional level. Others will be added in jurisdictions each quarter with all five in place by January 2011, Ratliff says. Similar division staff members are currently serving in each Central Conference region.

Ratliff says he wants the YPM staff members serving in jurisdictions to identify people in their jurisdictions who are excellent in particular areas of ministry and enlist them to be available to other people in ministry who need their expertise.

"We're trying to open up that conduit for ministry in both directions. And ultimately, the goal, of course, would be to help young people—both youth and young adults—to discover faith in Jesus Christ and to grow in that faith as Christian disciples and become Christian leaders in The United Methodist Church."

Gladstone says he feels the structure of The United Methodist Church is important because of the church's

reach in the world and the local resources it offers.

"I don't think that we can exist as a church up in the stratosphere of the institutional formation. The church always has to be focused on the ground, really making things happen, changing somebody's life and giving them the tools to immediately reconnect back on their block, in their city in a new way," says Gladstone.

He wants to create a peer-to-peer system for sharing all the ministry

wisdom in his jurisdiction. "In the area of youth and young adult ministries around the North-Central Jurisdiction, I'm starting to develop a list of people who have some expertise in particular areas—youth missions, young adult drama groups, campus ministry, all of those kinds of things."

Others will be able to connect with those resource people online. "So, someone coming to a website might type in their geographic area and see who is around them that has what

kind of expertise. Or they might type in: 'I really need to know something about small group ministry and youth programs,' and I'll drive wherever I need to drive to talk to somebody about that," he says.

Visit www.gbod.org for more information or call the Communications Office at (877) 899-2780, Ext. 1726.

* Tom Gillem is a Brentwood, TN-based freelance writer for the United Methodist Board of Discipleship

Young clergywomen blaze new trails from page 2

against the ecclesial tide. Female clergy lead only about 8 percent of U.S. churches, reports Mark Chaves, professor of sociology, religion and divinity at Duke University.

Twenty-seven percent of all United Methodist clergy are women, although the denomination's membership is nearly 60 percent female, said the Rev. HiRho Park, director of continuing formation for ministry at the UM Board of Higher Education.

"It is only logical to me that leaders should represent the constituency that they are serving," Park said.

'If you were a man'

The church the Rev. Elizabeth Evans Hagan serves is radically different from her Southern Baptist upbringing. "I think I developed a relationship with God, or a sense of spirituality, that I knew was going to be completely different from that of my parents, and even the church I grew up in," she says.

Her congregation at Washington Plaza Baptist Church in Reston, VA, includes a large African-American, Chinese and growing Hispanic representation. It is welcoming and affirming of all people, and is a church where seekers feel at home.

However, Hagan faces opposition at home: her father, a pastor, does not endorse women in ministry. According to Chaves, half of American congregations are either in denominations that do not permit female clergy, or independent churches that do not allow female head clergy.

When Hagan was growing up, she often led activities with her youth group. "People would come up to me afterward and say, 'If you were a man, you'd make a really good preacher.'"



Hagan prepares to baptize a parishioner.

she says.

A heart for urban ministry

Into the multicultural urban mix that is Florida City, Fla., the Rev. Audrey Warren is the only paid clergywoman on staff at Branches UMC. Fluent in Spanish, Warren requested a pastoral assignment in the Miami region. She says she wanted to serve where HIV/AIDS, poverty, crime, unemployment and teen pregnancy are high, while church growth and influence are low.

"A lot of the churches are not thriving because they don't know how to deal with [this diversity]," she says. "I have a heart for urban ministry and see those churches as being in places where they really can do a lot and bring people into relationship with Jesus Christ."

As a youth, Warren attended a United Methodist camp, first as a camper, then a counselor. "In sixth grade, my life was changed... [through] the family I found in the youth group," she says. She recalls telling her youth leader, "I want to do

what you do—lead people to Jesus Christ." Her youth leader's response was, "Great, but I think you'd be a good pastor." It wasn't that Warren didn't think she could become a pastor, but she had no model.

At 18, she preached her first sermon under the camp's auspices, and she went on to major in religion at Florida Southern College before attending Duke.

Today, Warren is the role model.

The traditional and customary roles for women, many of whom become single mothers as teens, involve work on farms or in the hospitality industry.

"Seeing a young, single, professional female has made them think,

'Wow, there are other options than having babies and depending on my husband — who may be selling drugs most of the time — to take care of my babies while I'm at work,'" she says.

And while 4-year-old Casandra is playing pastor, older girls at Branches are

determined to graduate from high school and perhaps eventually from college.

"I would like to call it incarnational ministry," says Warren. "I think the biggest transformation comes when we are in relationship with the people we live around and decide to be with them no matter what — just like Jesus is with us."

* Maria Mallory White is associate minister at New Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, Tallahassee, Fla. This article originally appeared in the Winter 2010 DIVINITY, the alumni magazine of Duke Divinity School.



The Rev. Audrey B. Warren (center, white shirt) first began to recognize her calling as a pastor through experiences at a United Methodist summer camp.

New Worship and Song collections planned for 2011

By Barbara Dunlap-Berg *

Although work on a new denominational hymnal was suspended in May 2009, the United Methodist Publishing House and the United Methodist Board of Discipleship are developing a shorter, different type of resource—"Worship & Song"—to be published in February 2011.

"The forthcoming 'Worship & Song' collection," said Gary Alan Smith, general editor, "will offer the best of the best of the newest worship resources to The United Methodist Church and beyond."

The new collection will include separate volumes for singing and worship. "To be included in the music volumes," Smith added, "are traditional hymns, praise and worship songs and choruses, Taizé chants, worship music from various racial-ethnic and global communities, and even some hymns from older generations that warrant a revival. Also included in its own volume will be non-musical worship resources (prayers, litanies and other liturgical acts of worship) intended for pastors and worship leaders as they plan worship."

"This is just the type of project that

makes sense at this time," said Neil Alexander, publishing house president and publisher. "It is an opportunity to work with worship leaders across the connection to offer music and worship resources that are currently not available and that can be made available in a matter of months."

The song collection will include up to 180 hymns and songs in a wide variety of styles. The worship resources collection will include service music, prayers, liturgies and spoken acts of worship. Neither collection will duplicate material contained in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992) or *The Faith We Sing* (2000).

Revision of *The United Methodist Hymnal* requires a vote of the General Conference. Supplementary resources such as the new worship and song collection augment the official hymnal and do not require formal denominational approval.

The collections will be available in print, digital and online versions. The music collection will include PowerPoint slides and CD accompaniment.

The worship resources collection also will include PowerPoint and PDF files. As rights are cleared, most of both collections will be available for individual purchase online. In addition, Internet downloads of hymns,

songs and worship resources that do not appear in the print volumes will be available.

"We are receiving a good bit of original material to be considered," Smith said. "As music and worship styles continue to evolve, our efforts to meet these changing needs will be ongoing, and I am excited and blessed to be able to be a part of this vital endeavor."

Persons desiring to submit original hymns, songs, service music and worship resources for publication consideration in the new collections may send submissions to Smith at gsmith@umpublishing.org.

* Barbara Dunlap-Berg is internal content editor, UM Communications, Nashville, TN.

Fund accepting applications for children with medical costs

The One Who Is Loved Fund is now accepting applications from all churches in the NC Annual Conference for gifts to help cover medical expenses of children under the age of 18 who have special needs such as specialized medical equipment, supplies or medication, transportation to hospitals or treatment centers, or other medical costs. (The Fund awards a maximum of \$1000 per child per year.)

Pastors are asked to submit letters of application for children in need by

March 31 to United Methodist Foundation, Inc., PO Box 10955, Raleigh NC 27605 or via e-mail to kmsmith@nccumc.org. Please include a short description of the child's need and the age of the child.

Requests will be reviewed and a committee will select the recipients to receive assistance.

To help this Fund serve the needs of more children, tax-deductible contributions to the Fund are invited and encouraged. All contributions should be sent to UMF at the above address.

Fair trade coffee supports camps

Raleigh coffee roaster Larry's Beans and the NC United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries have teamed up to send children to camp while providing churches, parishioners and camps with Fair Trade Organic coffee.

Under this program, the conference's three camps and participating United Methodist churches will be serving Larry's Beans coffee. Ten percent of all church coffee purchases will go to the Camp and Retreat Ministries Annual Fund and help to send deserving kids to camp.

Funds from the coffee program allow kids who otherwise couldn't go to camp to participate. In addition, this program aims to increase awareness of social justice issues.

To support this partnership, customers can order coffee through a special link on the Larry's Beans website. Purchases from the site by churches will be tracked to support Camp & Retreat Ministries. The link is <https://www.larrysbeans.com/fair-based-programs/#methodists>.

Social justice advocacy is focus of Student Forum 2010

United Methodist college students will focus on advocacy for social justice at Student Forum 2010, the national leadership conference of the United Methodist Student Movement, sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Registration is now open for the event, which will be held May 27-30 at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Va.

"Students will be given the opportunity to learn in-depth about one of eight different issues, including what they can do in their local communities to be advocates for themselves and others," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment at GBHEM. "One of the main goals of Forum is to give students the information and tools they need to apply what they have learned. I believe teaching students to advocate about different issues and providing them with resources they can use locally is one way we train students to be leaders in their local churches and campus ministries," added Lassiat.

Student leaders from all over the

U.S. are expected to gather for the conference, which is planned and organized by college students.

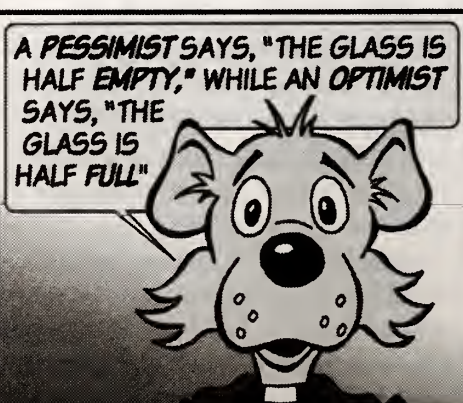
The theme is "Jesus' Story Empowering Disciples" and is based on Romans 5:1-5. The conference will have leadership training, spiritual formation, and networking. Workshop topics will include discerning call into ministry, organization and structure of The United Methodist Church, changing leadership in campus ministry, and rethinking evangelism.

The registration fee this year has been reduced to \$75 per person. The fee includes all conference materials, lodging, meals, and a \$5 contribution to the UMSM Mission Fund.

Registration for Student Forum is open to all young adult college and university students. In addition, each annual conference identifies three voting student delegates and six alternate delegates to the forum.

To register online or to learn more about the event, visit www.umsml.org/studentforum.

Church Mice™



Karl Zorowski

Hope for Haiti

MINDS AND HEARTS Reach Out to Help

By Barbara Dunlap-Berg *

United Methodists have set their hearts and minds to work since an earthquake devastated much of Haiti a month ago.

Through individual gifts and special offerings, benefit concerts and other innovative fundraisers, United Methodists have donated over \$12 million to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), as of Feb. 19 according to Melissa Hinnen, director of communications.

The time and talent of church members are meeting more than financial needs through the packaging of food, health, and layette kits being donated across the United Methodist connec-

tion. The efforts, large and small, are making a difference.

"We need ongoing support and prayers for the partnership in Haiti to stay strong," said the Rev. Paul Doherty, chair of the Michigan Area Haiti task force and an UMCOR liaison.

"The journey to bring relief to Haiti is going to be long and hard. It calls for generosity and sacrifice, said Doherty.

"Thank you for your financial help, your prayers and your volunteer service. A brighter day will come for Haiti. Thank you, Jesus!"

* Barbara Dunlap-Berg is internal content editor, UM Communications, Nashville, TN.

UMCOR DEVELOPS Long-Term Plan

By Kathy Gilbert *

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) opened a field office in Port-au-Prince and is hiring full-time staff as part of a five-year plan to help rebuild Haiti after the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Anthony Jones, who has 20 years of experience with humanitarian relief agencies, has been hired as an emergency response consultant.

Jones will be in Haiti for

the next two months, said Melissa Crutchfield, international disaster response executive with UMCOR.

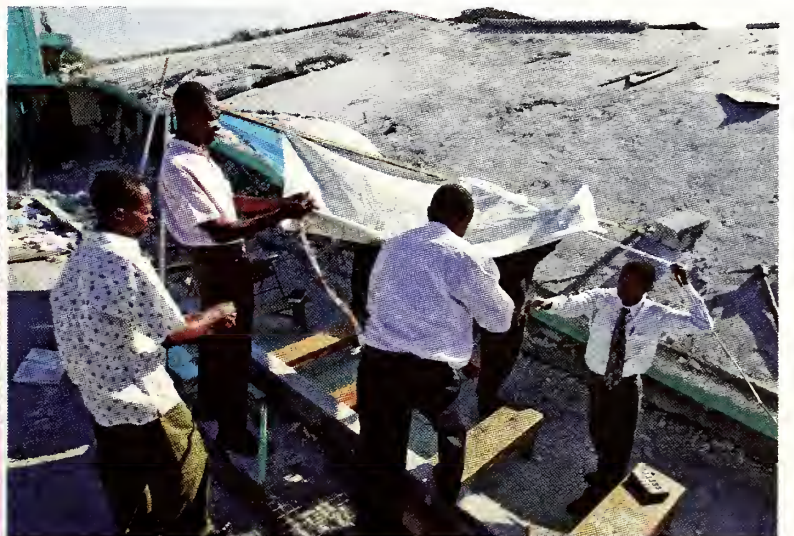
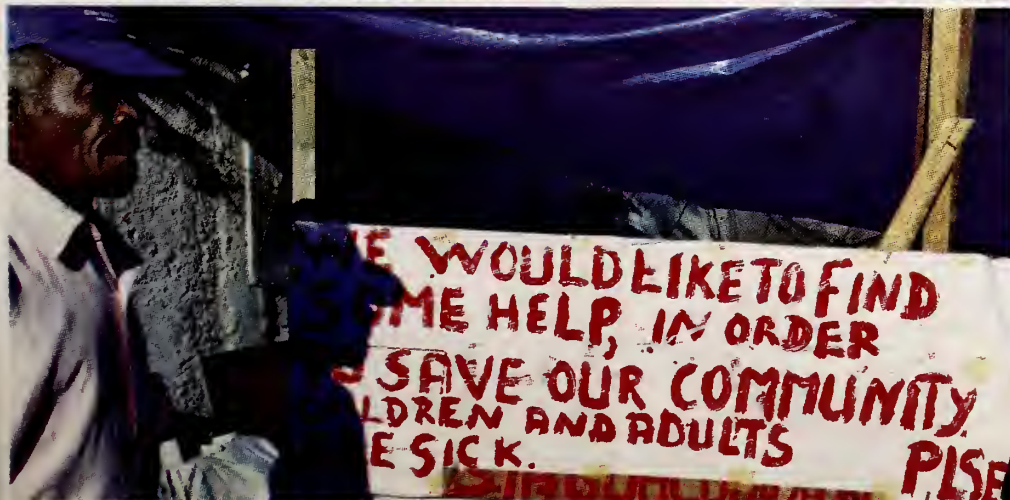
The UMCOR plan includes work defined in three phases: emergency, recovery and rehabilitation.

The emergency phase stretches from the time of the earthquake through April. It addresses the immediate needs of access to food, clean water and sanitation, tempo-

See "UMCOR develops," page 10

"SO WE REBUILT THE WALL,
AND ALL THE WALL WAS JOINED
TOGETHER...FOR THE PEOPLE HAD
a mind to work."
NEHEMIAH 4:6

ABOVE: A member of St. Martin Methodist Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, prays during an outdoor worship service amid the rubble of the destroyed sanctuary. (Photo by Mike DuBose/UMNS)



ABOVE: Members of St. Martin Methodist Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, erect a temporary sunshade for Sunday worship next to the flattened roof and rubble of their sanctuary and school buildings.

ABOVE LEFT: Laundry hangs out to dry among the damaged homes of the Canape Vert neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The interiors of many homes stand exposed due to damage from the earthquake.

BOTTOM LEFT: A Haitian man walks past a hand-lettered sign requesting aid for a makeshift encampment following the earthquake.

(All photos by Mike DuBose/UMNS)

NC CONFERENCE Districts Respond

Continued from page 1

Sanford and Wilson. A second workday was held Feb. 27 to include Rockingham, Raleigh, Greenville and New Bern districts. The districts of Fayetteville, Burlington, Elizabeth City, and Durham will have a workday March 27. Additional response projects are being planned.

Gray said the object was to "manage and organize the overwhelming number of people we had who wanted to be involved. We don't want everyone to show up at once. We need to manage the influx of goods and human volunteers. We're charged in our mission and ministry with the responsibility of being as effective as we can be."

On Feb. 6, volunteers arrived, their cars filling the parking lot. They found where they should be and began work, filling health and medical kits, household and food boxes, and laughing and talking as they did so.

Among them was Larry Vaudrin, a member of Closer Walk UMC in Leland. His reason for being there was simple: He was blessed and wanted to give back as a way of saying thank you. When asked to list some of his blessings, he said a roof over his head, food to eat and, most important of all, knowing where his family is. Though he knew where his wife and college-aged son and daughter were, when the earthquake first hit, he didn't know where Haiti was. "My wife and I had to look and see where it was on the map," he said.

It was a different story for Donna Scott of Lake Waccamaw UMC. Originally headed to her Dunn High School reunion, she decided it was more important that she participate in the MERCI workday. Scott was in Port-au-Prince 35 years ago and remembered Haiti as a poverty-ridden and beautiful country. Before leaving, she bought a painting that displayed Haiti's beauty — one that she has looked at every day.

She said she couldn't keep watching Haiti stories on the television news and not feel compelled to do something about it.

It was not just the adults who were helping at MERCI. Children (age 10 and older) were there as well, including members of Unity UMC's Kids in Christ (KIC) program from Warsaw.

Program members Ashlynn Hardison, 11, and Kari Westerbeek, 10, were in charge of getting rid of trash as people packed boxes. After finishing that, they packed canned foods for shipment. The girls said that they were moved by the needs of the Haitian people and how excited they would be to get the supplies.

The aid program was begun by the conference mission committee.

Prior to a regularly scheduled mission committee meeting, members of the executive committee spoke with each other and decided to change the meeting's focus to respond to the Haiti disaster, said Steve Taylor, missions director.

The committee called MERCI and Stop Hunger Now during the meeting in order to put a response plan together, Taylor said.

They later shared their suggestions with Bishop Al Gwinn and the cabinet, and a program that drew the districts together was finalized.

"This is what it means to be United Methodists, what it means to be part of a connexional church," Taylor said. "You can do more together than individually."

Prior to the workday, NCC United Methodists shipped six 53-foot containers of supplies, including medical supplies, food, water, and linens, said Ann Huffman, MERCI volunteer coordinator/casework supervisor.

"In addition, we have sent medical supplies by small plane," she said. "Each plane-load of supplies weighed between 1,200 and 7,000 pounds."

People who wish to do volunteer work at MERCI can register by calling 888-440-9167 or 919-739-9167. Volunteers are needed six days per week to help process the ongoing flow of donated supplies.

Funding is also needed. Donations can be given through any United Methodist Church offering plate in the conference.

Include one of the following Advance designations on the memo line: UMCOR: Haiti Disaster — Advance #418325 (for disaster relief/response in Haiti); N.C. Disaster Appeal — Conference Advance #S00096 (to assist in covering shipping costs); and MERCI Mission Center — Conference Advance Special #S00136 (to operate MERCI as a shipping and coordination point).

* Winkie Lee is a freelance writer living in Goldsboro.

LEFT: The first of three workdays outlined in the conference's plan to respond to the Haiti disaster drew over 300 volunteers. Six days per week, additional help is needed to process the deliveries of donated supplies. Directions to the MERCI Center, located in Goldsboro, are available at www.merciumc.org.



Stefan Youngblood

SONG INSPIRES HOPE

We Will Rise

By Susan Hogan *

*"We will rise once again,
From the place that we're in.
Hand in hand with faith we will stand
And with God as our guide, side by side
Together we will rise."*

— "We Will Rise"

Stefan Youngblood wanted to give hope to Haiti. First, he donated money. Then, he donated a song.

"We Will Rise," a song he composed, is being used in a music video to raise funds for Haiti through the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

"It's a song that's meant to inspire people in the midst of all the hopelessness and despair," said Youngblood. He leads music for The Gathering, a contemporary service at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh.

"People are putting to use the gifts that God gave them in any way they can to help the people of Haiti," said the Rev. Ned Hill, the church pastor.

Music often brings comfort to people in a way that words can't, Hill said. Youngblood's song, combined

with images from Haiti, make a powerful video, he added.

"This is music that will lift up anyone who is suffering and being challenged by life," said Rozlyn Sorrell of Garner, a classically-trained vocalist who participated in the recording.

Youngblood is answering phone calls from across the country—and even Canada—about the song. A caller from Haiti was interested in recording the song in Creole.

"People seem surprised that I'm giving out the sheet music and the choir tracks," Youngblood said. "Everything is free. This is what I can do."

UMCOR hopes video watchers will be inspired to donate to its Haitian relief effort.

Youngblood wrote the song after Hurricane Marilyn slammed into the Virgin Islands in 1995. He lived in St. Croix at the time. "On the day before the hurricane, people were boarding up windows and buying up candles," he said. "I bought a piano."

See "We Will Rise," page 10



MISSION LEADERS

Remembered

By Linda Unger *

Amid numerous calls to embrace with renewed vigor the baptismal commitment to mission, hundreds of colleagues, friends, ecumenical partners and family members celebrated the lives of Rev. Samuel W. Dixon, Jr., and Rev. Clinton C. Rabb in a memorial service held Feb. 11 at Riverside Church in New York City.

Dixon, a NC Conference elder, was the top executive of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Rabb was serving as leader of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM). Both men died of injuries they sustained during the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.

Services honoring Dixon were held in Roanoke Rapids and in Raleigh in January.

Although Bishop Bruce Ough, president of GBGM, was snowbound in his West Ohio Conference by a winter storm, his reflection on the tragedy in Haiti and the lives of Dixon and Rabb was read to those gathered.

Bishop Bruce Ough, president of GBGM, in remarks read to those gathered, said the tragedy in Haiti "reminds those who share the Christian faith of what we can, and cannot, count upon. We can count on God's abiding grace... But, we cannot count on being here tomorrow to do the things we have been called to do."

"Don't hesitate," he exhorted the gathering, "don't postpone, don't neglect your calling, and don't delay finding the new song that gives you peace like a river in your soul."

Throughout the service, the call to continue the mission of Rabb and Dixon by renewing the baptismal commitment was punctuated with readings and prayers by GBGM staff in Spanish, English and Korean, as well as with music and dance.

The Rev. Edith Gleaves, a NC Conference elder, deputy general secretary, gave the opening prayer.

Rev. James Gulley, an UMCOR consultant, and Dr. Sarla Chand, an executive with Interchurch Medical Assistance (IMA), both recounted the long, dark hours they and two other colleagues, Rick Santos and Ann Varghese of IMA, spent "under a canopy of concrete," in Gulley's words, waiting to be rescued.

"We may not be able to answer the question why [some survived and some did not], but there is a more important question," said Gulley. "What shall be our response to this event that happened to me and the others and nine million Haitians?"



Memorial in Haiti

- Walking up the curving driveway to the Hotel Montana on Jan. 22, Melissa Crutchfield stopped several times to pick flowers. Crutchfield, United Methodist Committee on Relief international disaster response director, was on her way to a memorial service for two United Methodist executives and friends who died in the hotel after being trapped inside during the earthquake that hit Jan. 12. The memorial service in Haiti was held at the same time the memorial service for Dr. Sam Dixon was being held in Raleigh. The Rev. Gesner Paul, president of the Methodist Church of Haiti, and the Rev. Marlo Despestra, also an official with the church, coordinated the gathering. The private service began with the singing of "Amazing Grace." While Paul prayed, a search and rescue team was still working to recover bodies from the rubble. "They came to help us," Despestra said. "It must have been a very painful time, they must have suffered a lot. We don't understand why or ask God why. The God who created us is with us now." The small gathering said The Lord's Prayer together. "We commit their souls to God and his Son. We know one day we will have the privilege of being with them in heaven," Paul said. "The Methodist Church in Haiti is grateful for their service." (Photo by Mike DuBose/UMNS)

CHAPEL AND MEETING ROOM TO BE Dedicated to Dixon

The NC Conference Board of Trustees has voted that the chapel and large meeting room in the new NC Conference headquarters facility will be dedicated in honor of the late Dr. Sam Dixon.

Dixon, an NC Conference elder, was serving as head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). He was on assignment in Haiti when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit the already impoverished country on Jan. 12. Dixon died in the aftermath of the earthquake as rescue workers attempted to free him from the rubble of a hotel collapse.

"We are honored to remember Sam in this way by dedicating this area of worship and learning to his memory," said Cashar Evans, trustees president. Laura Little, a conference trustee, expressed that "Sam was a tireless servant of Jesus Christ work-

ing diligently to his end for those less privileged all over the world."

The room will be dedicated as the Dixon Chapel and Meeting Room during the building dedication service planned for early June. Details of this service will be announced closer to the service date.

There is seating for approximately 150 people in the room planned to be the chapel and meeting room.

When used as a training facility with training tables, there will be seating for approximately 50 with outlets and cabling for computer training workshops.

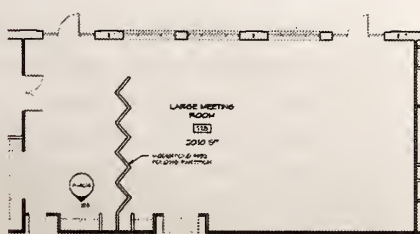
The west side or main wall of the room will include appropriate décor for a chapel or prayer room so that the room can be used for a worshipful



Dixon at an Indonesian school.

experience. The conference facility is planned to be completed during May with required indoor air testing being performed at that time.

The building dedication service is tentatively planned for early June and conference operations will move just after the Annual Conference session in June.



The Dixon Chapel and Meeting Room

SUPPORT THE WORK Memorial Gifts

Gifts may be made to the Advance in memory of the mission leaders:

In Memory of Rev. Dr. Samuel W. Dixon, Jr.: Memorial gifts should be directed to the Haiti Relief Fund of UMCOR. Make checks to UMCOR with "Advance #418325 Dixon

Memorial" in the memo line.

In Memory of Rev. Clinton Rabb: Memorial gifts should be directed to the Individual Volunteers Program. Make checks to the General Board of Global Ministries with "Advance #982465 Rabb Memorial" in the memo line.

* Linda Unger is staff writer for UMCOR.

UMCOR DEVELOPS Long-Term Plan

Continued from page 7

rary shelter, and emotional and spiritual support.

During the recovery phase, which is expected to run through the first-year anniversary of the disaster, UMCOR will respond to needs for increasingly permanent homes, schools, clinics and churches, along with jobs and other concerns.

The third phase, rehabilitation, will likely stretch through January 2015 and will offer assistance for both physical reconstruction and economic development as well as rebuilding health, education and other systems.

"The response of the church has been remarkable and generous," said Bishop Joel Martinez, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries interim top executive. "Even the smallest gift has the power to bless."

In the days leading up to the one-

month anniversary of the quake, the seven wealthiest nations of the world, known as the G-7, agreed to forgive Haiti its outstanding debts.

"The debt cancellation will give Haiti some economic breathing room," Martinez said, "but it will not solve all of the problems there."

Steps are being taken to prepare for United Methodist Volunteers in Mission teams to respond in Haiti.

In collaboration with the Methodist Church in Haiti, volunteer projects and programs are being developed to align with UMCOR's work plan, Crutchfield said.

Those interested in registering to serve in Haiti are asked to complete the online form at <http://secure.gbmg-umc.org/HaitiVolunteer/>.

* Kathy Gilbert is a UMNS news writer based in Nashville, TN.

NEW UMCOR HAITI NEWSLETTER

Stay informed about UMCOR's work in Haiti through the newsletter "Be There. Be Hope. In Haiti." Launched in February, the newsletter provides weekly updates of UMCOR's immediate relief and long-term recovery work in Haiti. The newsletter also highlights some of the creative ways UMCOR supporters are raising awareness and funds for the vast needs of the Haitian people since the January 12 temblor. The newsletter is available at www.umrespond.org each week or by email subscription.



LEFT: A crucifix stands amid the rubble of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. (Photo by Mike DuBose/UMNS)

SONG INSPIRES HOPE We Will Rise

Continued from page 8

He wrote the song by candlelight with his children in tow. He rounded up a couple of dozen children from the island for the first recording.

The song resurfaced after a cyclone devastated Myanmar in 2008.

The version being used by UMCOR was recorded using North Carolina talent after Hurricane Katrina in

2005. Youngblood tapped college students, high school students, professional singers and children from various churches to sing.

He said his sister, a former producer for Oprah Winfrey, put together the music video after Haiti's earthquake last week using photographs from the scene.

Another singer—Janice Fletcher, of Rolesville—said that people in Haiti are facing a tragedy beyond what most people can comprehend.

"We want them to know that they are not forgotten," she said. "We want them to know that we are rallying behind them."

* Susan Hogan is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

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Upcoming Events

ZOE Ministry hosting an Evening with Kay Warren on March 19

ZOE Ministry will host a fundraising event with author Kay Warren, wife of pastor Rick Warren, on Friday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. at Duke Chapel in Durham. All are invited to attend. All of the evening's proceeds benefit ZOE's orphan empowerment work in Africa. Also offered that day is a free Mission Symposium with the Rev. Shane Stanford at 3:30 pm in Duke Divinity School. More information about both events is available on ZOE's website at www.zoeministry.org.

The featured guest, Kay Warren, and her husband Rick Warren, are widely recognized for starting Saddleback Church and many powerful initiatives that minister to people in need. An accomplished writer and author, Warren uses her far-reaching influence as a voice for those who suffer due to HIV/AIDS.

During the event, Warren will speak about her ministry on behalf of people suffering because of HIV/AIDS and the experiences that led her to write her latest book, "Dangerous Surrender."

ZOE Ministry is an NC Conference-based non-profit organization empowering children who have been orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. Through grants and training, child-led households in the Giving Hope program become self-sustaining and reintegrated into their communities within two to three years.

DBOM holding U2charist communion service on March 27

Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) will hold its first U2charist on Saturday, March 27, 7 p.m. at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh. Funds from the event will benefit DBOM's outreach ministry and relief work in Haiti. U2charist is a traditional communion service that features the music of the band U2 (played live), and centers on these themes: desire for God, God's love for the poor, and God's call for justice for the exploited and oppressed. The Cary-based band, "U2FX" has agreed to provide U2charist throughout the NC Conference in support of DBOM. Local churches are also invited to hold a U2charist. To learn more, visit www.u2fx.org.

Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry is April 10



Bishop
Kammerer

The North Carolina Conference chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) is sponsoring the 2nd annual Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry on Saturday, April 10 from 9-3 p.m. at Avent Ferry UMC in Raleigh. Bishop Charlene Kammerer, resident bishop of the Virginia Conference, is the keynote speaker. The title of the conference is "Here I Stand, I Can Do No Other" taken from Martin Luther. The focus of the conference is on individuals who have spoken prophetically and paid a price. The cost is \$25 and that includes breakfast and lunch and \$15 for students. Those attending can make their checks payable to: MFSA-NC and mail it to MFSA-NC c/o Henry Jarrett PO Box 18311 Raleigh NC 27619-8311. Any questions can be directed by email to Henry Jarrett at jarretth@bellsouth.net or call (919) 606-5674.

Being a Church for all Generations

Hinton Rural Life Center announces an upcoming workshop on May 10-11, featuring author and church/clergy coach Eddie Hammett and co-author of "Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations." This will be an intense two-day event where pastors and lay persons will garner new hands-on tools to take back to their congregations. Visit www.hintoncenter.org for more information.

Conference UMM Rally coming April 16-17; mission challenges issued

By Barry Merrill *

The 2010 NCC United Methodist Men (UMM) Annual Rally will celebrate men across the conference being drawn into mission with a theme of "Empowering the Mighty

Men of God."

This year's rally will be held at the MERCI Center, just outside of Goldsboro, April 16-17, beginning at 10 a.m. The site was chosen to give attendees an opportunity to participate in mission work and draw men

into Christ's plan for their lives.

Two keynote speakers are scheduled presently for the April rally and a third speaker may be announced in the coming weeks.

NCC Bishop Al Gwinn will address the men. Also scheduled is the UMM

National President, John Dowell of the Florida Conference. Other dignitaries, including the Southeastern Jurisdiction UMM president, L.W. Smith of South Carolina, are expected to attend.

The rally follows the traditional 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. format. For those wanting to learn more about and participate in mission projects during the weekend, additional work projects will be offered Friday evening at 6 p.m., Saturday morning before 10 a.m., and Saturday afternoon 2-4 p.m. The MERCI Center has overnight accommodations available for a modest fee.

Rally organizers have issued several missional challenges to attendees (See details at left.)

Other means of empowerment UMM will be celebrating are the successful fellowships around the conference and how they are glorifying God through their work.

One of the focuses of the rally will be the new Men's Ministry Specialist program. North Carolina has more trained Men's Ministry Specialists than any other state. The specialists are empowered to go into the local church to help organize, develop and expand local church fellowships in the primary function of the local church: making disciples for Christ.

NCC's Men's Ministry Specialists will be introduced, their program explained, and information given on how churches can enlist them to work with their fellowships.

For information and registration, visit www.ncumm.org. Men attending the rally are asked to register at the website.

* Barry Merrill is coordinator of the rally.

UMM Rally mission focus—putting faith into action

In keeping with the theme, "Empowering the Mighty Men of God," the NC Conference United Methodist Men (NCCUMM) are calling on men attending the annual rally (see article above), to put their faith into action in support of three ministries, the Society of St. Andrew, the Upper Room Prayer Center, and in NC Conference support, through MERCI, for response to the disaster in Haiti.

Society of St. Andrew

For 30 years, the Virginia-based Society of St. Andrew (SOSA) has been working to end hunger in the United States. For the past 18 years with the establishment of a Durham office of the ministry, North Carolinians have been responding to SOSA's call to feed the hungry through gleaning and aiding area food banks.

While many UMM fellowships across the conference regularly support SOSA, NCCUMM is asking each attendee to make a special effort to feed the hungry in eastern North Carolina by bringing a 10 lb. bag of potatoes to the rally.

NCCUMM is also asking men,

before coming to the rally, to make a special appeal at their churches to aid the work of SOSA. With SOSA delivering a meal at an average cost of just under 3¢ per meal, NCCUMM is asking each church represented at the rally to collect at least \$150 to feed 5,000 people.

Prayer Center

In April, the Upper Room Living Prayer Center will celebrate 33 years of answering the Prayer Line and providing caring listeners and prayers to share the heart of Christ with hurting people. UMM were fundamental in establishing this prayer ministry, and many UMM in the Conference regularly answer the prayer line, serve as covenant prayer groups, continuing to lift up prayer requests, and financially support the work.

Each church is being asked to bring a prayer warrior to the fellowship to answer the Prayer Line, a rally tradition, and to pray for the fellowship. Sign-ups for the prayer line will be part of on-line registration for the rally at the conference UMM website, www.ncumm.org.

Each church can also help support this prayer ministry with their finan-

cial support, which has been forced to cut back their services with the economic downturn. Each church is being asked to collect at least \$100 to support the Prayer Line.

Disaster Relief

To support MERCI as it works with conference churches in ministry to the devastated in Haiti, each man is being asked to bring either a bag of food or a health kit, sometimes called a medical kit, and each fellowship is being asked to bring at least \$100 to support the work of MERCI.

A food kit includes an unopened bag of dry beans, an unopened bag of rice, an unopened pop-top can of fruit and an unopened pop-top can of vegetables. Visit <http://ncumm.org/missions> and review the NC Conference Response Plan for a list of health kit contents.

The contents of all emergency response kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations.

Information about emergency kits is also available from each district mission secretary or from the district offices.

Methodist University adds nursing, expands PA facility, programs

Methodist University in Fayetteville has been approved to add a nursing program to the school's medical curriculum and has been awarded a grant to improve facilities to support expanding the school's existing physician assistant program.

Unanimous approval

The North Carolina Board of Nursing recently approved the school's application to start the nursing program with unanimous approval and no recommendations.

Students who enter the university in the August 2010 semester can begin the pre-nursing program in preparation for admission into the Professional Nursing Studies program in their junior year. Students completing the program will earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing

(BSN) degree.

Recruiting efforts began immediately after the State Board of Nursing announced its approval. The University Admissions Office reports that 116 students interested in the nursing program have already applied. Prospective students interested in this program may contact the MU Admissions Office at (910) 630-7027 or (800) 488-7110.

Expanding PA program

The Belk Foundation awarded a \$250,000 grant to Methodist University for the construction of a Human Anatomy Laboratory and Medical Lecture Hall. The new building will provide necessary facilities for the expansion of Methodist University's Physician Assistant (PA) Program.

The program, begun in 1996, has

produced 189 physician assistants who practice predominantly in North Carolina, but also serve throughout the nation and overseas in the military. Currently, 129 Methodist PAs practice in 32 North Carolina counties, many of which are medically underserved.

Methodist's PA Program—one of only five in the state—is currently approved to admit up to 34 new students each year, for which the program receives over 300 applications.

Methodist plans to expand its Physician Assistant Program's annual enrollment from 34 to 47 students.

In order to do so, the University must first expand its existing facilities by constructing a 7,778 square foot Medical Lecture Hall and a 4,516 square foot Human Anatomy Laboratory.

Tentative approval has been received from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), its accrediting body, for the increase.

To meet the accreditation for the increased enrollment, the University will need a classroom capable of seating 150 students, and an anatomy lab capable of accommodating 50 students and 12 cadavers.

Methodist University launched its Prescription for Success campaign in January 2008 to raise the \$2.8 million needed to construct the buildings. To date, gifts and pledges of \$1.8 million have been received.

Construction was anticipated to begin no later than January 2010. Both buildings apply for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

April 4, 2010

Texts: John 13:21-30; 16:16-24;
20:11-16

"The Community Faces Pain and Joy"

During the Christmas holiday, our college junior grandson returned to his summer job at The Peanut Shoppe of Williamsburg.

As he entered the store for work one day, he noticed that a package of special sauce had been knocked off the counter onto the floor. He picked up the stray package and slipped it into his pocket until he could he could get checked in and could return the item to its right place.

When he put the package into his pocket, a woman behind him said in an accusatory voice, "Young man, don't think I didn't see that!" He explained that he worked at the store and his accuser said, "Oh."

Mistaken identity. Mistaken impression of what is going on. This week's Easter text is filled with such situations.

The disciples try to figure out what Jesus means (John 16:17-18). What is first seen as pain is actually the seed of joy (John 16:22). In the garden, Mary Magdalene does not recognize

the risen Jesus (John 20:14). Then she thought the one she saw was the gardener (John 20:15).

Maybe we have heard the Easter story so often that we are quite sure that we would recognize Jesus and that we would understand exactly what was going on.

If our risen Lord showed up in a glowing white robe, we might recognize him.

If our risen Lord appeared with a majestic crown on his head, we might recognize him.

If our risen Lord showed up lifting his arms while flashing "V for Victory" signs, we might recognize him.

But, if the Easter Lord is seen when a lonely person shows up at our church on Sunday morning, we might have a case of mistaken identity.

But, if the Easter Lord comes when there is a drive to gather cans for the food bank, we might miss what is really going on.

But, if the Easter Lord stands at the door of our clothing closet for the needy, we might not know who He is.

Nevertheless, Jesus said that when we ministered to the hungry, thirsty, unclothed, strange, and imprisoned, we ministered to Him (Matthew 25:44-45).

After all, does not our liturgy say "The Risen Christ is with us"? Indeed, as Fred Kaan's hymn asserts,

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

"We meet you, O Christ, in many a guise" (Hymn 257, *United Methodist Hymnal*).

So, Happy Easter, and let's expect to meet Jesus in some unexpected places.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Learning the Way: Reclaiming Wisdom from the Earliest Christian Communities* (The Alban Institute), Cassandra D. Carkoff Williams has written, "The resurrection of Jesus, which makes possible the resurrected life of discipleship, is the most profound revelation of God's grace. A resurrected way of being, therefore, is characterized by grace."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Risen Lord, do I see You?..."

April 11, 2010

Text: 1 John 2:7-17

"Love Within the Community"

"All in favor of love, raise your hands." "All in favor of hate, raise your hands." "And the winner is..."

There is not much doubt that given a choice, most of us would vote for love. At least, we would vote for love with our lips, even when we vote for hate with our lives.

The writer of 1 John does not mince words when stating "Whoever says, 'I have come to know him,' but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist" (1 John 2:4).

This epistle lesson contrasts light with darkness and contrasts love with hate (1 John 2:9-11).

Isn't "hate" a bit strong as a term to depict our little broken relationships, our petty bickering, our unkind gossip, our shallow caring, our slight indifference?

Surely, the Bible is talking about big-time hate, things like wars and murder and ethnic cleansing. If that is all the Scripture addresses, then I am pretty much off the hook. But the writer John is writing specifically about the daily life routines within the community, among brothers and sisters of the faith.

These verses are not about how we treat others—outsiders—so much as it is about how we treat ourselves, our family—insiders. (The broader picture shows up in other places in the Bible, but not so much here.)

In other words, John's letter—and its reference to hate—is aimed at the Church family.

James Strong suggests that one interpretation of the Greek word for hate is "less love."

Anything less than full love of God and full love of neighbor qualifies as New Testament hate!

That does not leave us much wiggle room. It is the same judgment in which we find ourselves by the injunction to be perfect (1 John 2:5, Matthew 5:48).

As John Wesley inquired of his potential preachers: "Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to (look forward to) be made perfect in love in this life?"

Where has love lost out in the Church community (1 John 2:11)?

Where have the world's values (1 John 2:16) shaped our decision-making?

Where have we let the dimness of our spiritual formation turn into the darkness of hate (1 John 2:11)?

"Fathers" is a New Testament term for those who are mature in the faith (1 John 2:13-14).

"Little children" is a New Testament term for those who are new to the faith (1 John 2:13-14).

"Young people" is a New Testament term for those known for their activity in serving (1 John 2:13-14).

One of those terms probably fits me...and you. So, these verses about love (and hate) are written to us. Uh, so what?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Rudolf Bultmann wrote (*The Johannine Epistles*, Fortress Press) "Just as darkness and light are mutu-

See "Bible Study," page 13

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DEATHS

LITTLE, Velva, wife of Milton Little (Fayetteville: retired), died Feb. 8. The funeral service was held Feb. 11 in Roseboro.

April adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

ally exclusive antitheses, so, too, are hate and love."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Loving God, teach me love..."

April 18, 2010

Text: Matthew 5:17-20; 22:34-40
"Connecting in Community"

If you had the chance, what would you ask Jesus?

Would you want some explanation of undeserved suffering?

Would you inquire as to whether Judas was his enemy, or, as some contemporary thinkers say, his best friend?

Would you wonder if he preferred United Methodists to Episcopalians?

And what about asking about the recent NCAA basketball finals?

Just what would you ask Jesus?

The Sadducees (highly placed religious and political leaders) and the Pharisees (a Jewish religious party that tried to live out the Law of Moses) had questions for Jesus.

Sometimes, they used their questions in an effort to trick Jesus. In Matthew 22:35, one of them asked a question in order to test Jesus. The King James Version says the question was asked "tempting" Jesus. The word translated "testing" or "tempting" is the same word that is used for assaying gold, determining whether the gold is authentic or not. The question posed in this text (Matthew 22:35-36) could be raised in order to determine if Jesus is for real, authentic or not.

In the *Version Synodale* translation of the New Testament into French, there is an interesting choice of words. In Matthew 22:35, the translation says that the Pharisees asked him the question in order *l'éprouver*. One rendering of that text into English would be "to test him." However, the same French word also means "to feel or to experience." The implication is that the Pharisees want to experience the real Jesus, to feel His pulse, as it were.

There is not much surprise in Jesus' answer that loving God is at the heart of the matter.

But he does not stop there. Reaching back into the teachings of Moses (Leviticus 19:18), Jesus says, in effect, "But loving neighbor is the way that is done" (Matthew 22:39). But it is more than even that. You

are also supposed to love yourself!

Loving oneself is biblical! Love for self has its seed in God's love of us. Indeed, have you noticed that persons who do not have self-respect seldom show genuine respect for others?

Persons who do not feel that God loves them seldom have the spiritual energy to love others.

It's a package deal. Love God. Love neighbor. Love self.

In God's economy, there is enough love to go around.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In writing about her struggle with *acedia* (an indifference, a lack of caring, apathy, boredom), Kathleen Norris (*Acedia and Me*, Riverhead Books) penned these words: "For *acedia* is not merely a personal vice. Left unchecked, it can unravel the great commandment: as I cease to practice my love of God, I am also less likely to observe a proper love of my neighbor or myself."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Your love lives among us, O God..."

April 25, 2010

Text: Luke 14:7-24
"Inclusion in Community"

Sometimes when I am a guest preacher at a special occasion, the host church will invite me to the front of the line for the covered dish lunch. I try to protest enough to appear humble, but then I go ahead and enjoy the first choice among the country ham, the fried chicken, the pimento cheese sandwiches, the Italian cream cake, and, of course, the one carrot strip that I take in order to be healthy.

When my brother-in-law died last December, the people of the church where the funeral was held provided bountiful tables of food, not just for the family but for everyone who came to the service.

The sadness of the occasion soon took on the flavor of reminiscing, chatter with nephews not often seen, and the kind of quiet laughter that signals that in the midst of death, life is still good.

One of the ongoing jokes in the dartball league in which I play is that the annual "sportsmanship trophy" is awarded not necessarily to the team that has shown the best quality as good sports, but to the team that has consistently provided the most lavish snacks for the between-game breaks.

(For the record, as of this writing, Northern Free Will Baptist Church and Rose of Sharon Baptist Church are ahead in this year's "sportsmanship/food" derby.)

It is no wonder that Jesus so often turned to images of food and meals and banquets to teach us about the reign of God! It is language that we understand. It is truth to which we can relate. It is life as we know it.

In this week's text, Jesus is making the point that to be invited by God is serious business.

You and I might not make out the same guest list as God does, but it is clear that God is going to have a party with those who will come (Luke 14:21).

In Jesus' time, there were typically two invitations to a dinner, one extended far enough in advance for

good planning and one offered at the time of the event. (Do you hear an echo in an invitation at Holy Communion: "All things are ready. Come now to the feast of the Lord"?)

In this story, however, Jesus says that it is not enough to offer an initial "yes" if you don't stick with your promise to come.

God's Table has room for all kinds usually ignored by society (Luke 14:21). What are you going to do with your invitation?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Geoffrey Wainwright has written (*Eucharist and Eschatology*, Oxford University Press): "The Eucharist epitomizes the divine Mystery. To the eyes of faith it is the revelation of God's design for (our) salvation in Jesus Christ; for in the Eucharist the Lord receives (humankind) in fellowship at His table."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Bountiful God of invitation..."

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calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Duke Endowment scholarship aid for confirmation weekends

The Duke Endowment has given permission to The Intentional Growth Center at Lake Junaluska to provide scholarship aid to churches identified as "North Carolina Rural" for Confirmation Retreat Weekends at 50% of the program fee. The weekends, with the theme "I Promise," are scheduled in March, April and November. Speakers, music, and presentations focus on the membership vows of "prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness." For details, visit <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/confirmation.aspx> or call 800-482-1442. These funds are awarded on a first come, first served basis.

Retirement planning seminar

Register now for the upcoming Conference Board of Pension's Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar April 29-30. This event will be held at the Riverside Hilton hotel in Wilmington. Check out their website for local attractions and amenities: www.wilmingtonriverside.hilton.com. Experience has shown that when clergy families have a good handle on their financial condition and future plans, then ministry is enhanced as the burdens of financial worries are lessened. The topics addressed at this seminar will help prepare clergy anticipating retirement within ten years. Registration deadline is April 1. For a brochure and registration form, visit the Treasurer's Office Pensions page or contact JoAnna Cafferty in the Treasurer's Office at 1-800-849-4433 x 225.

Clergy Spouses' Day Apart

A Spouses' Day Apart will be held on April 24 at the First UMC in Nashville, from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Margaret Therkelsen, a well-known person of prayer and faith, speaker and author, will be the keynote speaker. The cost of \$20 will include lunch and snack breaks. Childcare will be provided. For information and a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/events/csdp/>.

Resolutions and reports due

Resolutions for 2010 must be submitted to the Conference Secretary's Office no later than May 10. Reports from the committees, boards, and agencies are due no later than May 1. Reports should be submitted electronically in MS Word format to smedlin@nccumc.org. Contact Shannon Medlin at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 222 if you have questions.

Ebony Exploration for youth

Lake Junaluska will host its 3rd annual Ebony Youth Christian Vocation Exploration Retreat April 9-11. Go to <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/ebony-youth-retreat-release/> for details about the purpose of the event and speakers. To register, contact Dr. Lawrence Johnson at ljohnson@nccumc.org or Dr. Melba McCallum at mdgmccallum@yahoo.com.

Historical Society, Archives and History meeting in April

The spring meeting of the NC Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History which was scheduled for Saturday, April 10, has been changed to Saturday, April 17. The groups will meet at Pleasant Green UMC in Durham. Church historians and interested persons are invited to attend. Lunch will be served. Please contact Robin Harry, rharry@nccumc.org or 919-832-9560, ext. 252 to reserve a spot for lunch.

Upcoming lay speaker training events and contacts

Lay speaker trainings have been scheduled in the NC Conference as follows:

- ♦ Rocky Mount District, 4/17, Basic Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472 to register.
- ♦ Rocky Mount District, 5/1, Advanced Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472/236-5490 to register.
- ♦ Burlington District, 5/21, Advanced Training, call Bonnie Francis - 336-449-9636 to register.

Treasurer training video available

Videos and presentation handouts from the Local Church Treasurer and Finance Committee training event offered recently are available at <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/treasurer-training-video-resource-available/>. The training event covered fraud survey findings and local church minimum internal control recommendations and also included a question and answer time and a discussion of stewardship best practices. With changes to the *Book of Discipline, 2008*, Finance Committees are now required to have written financial policies documenting the internal controls for the church. As part of the presentation handouts, a sample financial policy document is available as well as an in-depth publication on church audit requirements.

DISCIPLE study trainings scheduled

The Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, in partnership with The Duke Endowment, will offer two free trainings for NC Conference leaders of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP in September. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call 336-454-5348.

conference CALENDAR

March

- 2 Leadership Academy Days of Learning, Edenton Street UMC, Raleigh
- 6 Conference Confirmation Celebration, Methodist University
- 8 - 10 Stewardship Training for New Pastors; Trinity Center, Salter Path
- 14 One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday
- 16 - 21 Global Vision for Youth
- 23 CJAMM Meeting, 10am, UM Building
- 28 Palm/Passion Sunday

- 9 - 11 Kaleidoscope for Youth, Don Lee Retreat Center
- 10 Second Annual Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry, Avent Ferry UMC: Raleigh, 10am
- 14 - 15 Conference UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat, Centenary UMC: Smithfield
- 17 NC Conference Historical Society & Commission on Archives and History, Pleasant Green UMC: Durham
- 18 Native American Ministries Sunday

- 23 - 24 Deepening Your Effectiveness Discipleship Seminar for lay and clergy
- 24 Spouses Day Apart, 10am, Nashville UMC
- 25 Conference Youth Rally Day, NC Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC
- 28 Older Adult Ministries Committee Meeting, 10am, Methodist Building

April

- 2 Good Friday
- 4 Easter Sunday
- 6 - 7 Retreat for pastors in Cross-Racial Appointments, Camp Rockfish
- 8 - 10 Ebony Exploration Youth Event, Lake Junaluska

- 30 - May 2 UMW National Assembly, St. Louis, MO

NC Conference events are available online
at www.nccumc.org/calendar

Guardian Angels honored at annual MHC fundraising gala

Three churches and the legacy of an individual were the focus of this year's Guardian Angel awards at the 13th annual A Winter's Tale gala, hosted by Methodist Home for Children (MHC) on Saturday, Jan. 23 at the Raleigh Convention Center.

The Guardian Angel Society recognizes those who, through their service and support, have raised upward of \$25,000 for MHC. "It is through the generosity of supporters such as the Guardian Angels, that MHC is able to provide quality care for the children and families it serves," said the Rev. Bruce Stanley, MHC president/CEO.

Honored this year were Brown's Chapel and Pleasant Hill United Methodist Churches, led by the Rev. Ray Gooch, and located in Pittsboro; Alan and Sandy Pratt of Wilmington, administrators of the Valentine B. Pratt Charitable Trust; and the North Raleigh United Methodist Church, led by Senior Pastor David S. Clift.

Since 1982, Rev. Gooch has served as pastor of Browns Chapel and Pleasant Hill United Methodist Churches. He and his congregations have been a long-time supporters of MHC. "Though considered small in size with 290 members combined, the churches hold the distinct honor of raising more money on MHC Sunday than many of their larger

church counterparts," said Rev. Stanley. Other fundraising efforts include fish fries, walk-a-thons and youth rallies, and a Father's Day rose sale.

Since 2004, the Valentine B. Pratt Charitable Trust has supported MHC program efforts through the generous bequest of Valentine Pratt.

A graduate of Cornell University, Pratt lived in Corning, NY for over 60 years, relocating to Raleigh in 1997.

At his death, his trust was established to support non-profit organizations reflecting his long-time commitment to children, people in need, and the preservation of local history.

North Raleigh United Methodist Church has a long-standing history with MHC.

North Raleigh's relationship began at Monks Chapel, which existed on the Methodist Orphanage campus during

the 1960s and later became North Raleigh UMC.

Today, church members support MHC through fundraising efforts by Sunday school classes, UMM and UMW members, and Youth Missions. Senior Pastor David S. Clift has led this 2,000-member congregation for two-and-a-half years.

On hand to accept the award were Bob Smith, North Raleigh UMC business administrator and his wife Elizabeth, who chairs the church's council on ministries.



Rev. Ray Gooch



Alan and Sandy Pratt

*Photos by Timeless Photography,
The Fine Art of Photography*

A Winter's Tale Gala has record-setting success in attendance and financial support

Despite a lagging economy, a record number of supporters of Methodist Home for Children (MHC), turned out for the agency's signature fundraising event, A Winter's Tale, held Jan. 23 at the Raleigh Convention Center.

A total of \$207,000 was raised from the support of over 500 guests, through both a silent and live auction. Featured speakers at the event included Don Yaeger, a former *Sports Illustrated* associate editor and *New York Times* best-selling author, and Alex and Sonji Carlton, MHC foster parents, who shared a story of their journey from foster parents to adoptive parents of two young children. Debra Morgan, WRAL anchor, served as hostess for the evening.

Around the CONFERENCE



Rockingham District Collects Food for Haiti

Several churches in the Rockingham District, including First UMC Laurinburg and Caledonia UMC, collected health kits and food for the devastated people of Haiti in response to the disaster response plan developed by the conference's District Mission Secretaries. Exceeding the goals for this project, two loads of goods have been delivered to the MERCI Center in Goldsboro. Pictured above are (L-R) Cecil Weeks, Tommy Lewis, and Jackie Lawrence who delivered the supplies to the MERCI Center. Also helping was Linda Lawrence (not pictured). The Rev. Patricia Stone is pastor of Caledonia UMC, and the Rev. Ralph Brown serves at First UMC Laurinburg.



Methodist University holds candlelight vigil

Methodist University staff and students held a candlelight vigil and have begun relief efforts for the people of Haiti.

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Life-experiences of United Methodist family lead to book and film exploring NC history and the journey of racial reconciliation

By Linda Bloom *

Timothy Tyson never forgot what happened in Oxford the summer he turned 11.

The memories of the murder there that inflamed racial tensions persisted even after the family left town when his father, the Rev. Vernon Tyson, an NC Conference elder, was asked to move to another United Methodist church in Wilmington.

The younger Tyson returned to Oxford for occasional visits, paying attention to how the community coped with racial tension and connecting it with his experiences with school integration as a middle- and high-school student.

"We had a lot of violence in the hallways," recalled Tyson, a historian who is now 50 years old. "We had dozens of buildings burned in Wilmington. We had the National Guard in the streets. Going through the experience of school integration, which was both good and bad, made me want to know how this craziness got started."

A discovery

One day in 1982, when he was a freshman at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Tyson discovered he could look up back issues of the Raleigh News-Observer at Jenkins Library.

He was so intent on reading the news coverage of the May 11, 1970, killing of Henry "Dickie" Marrow, an African-American Vietnam War veteran, and its aftermath, that he sat in the library for 12 hours straight.

When the building closed at midnight, he hid in a restroom until everyone had left, then continued reading the old news accounts for the rest of the night.

Later, Tyson went to Oxford and conducted his first oral history, interviewing Robert Teel, one of those accused and acquitted in Marrow's murder, for a paper he was writing for college.

He transferred to Emory University and finished his undergraduate degree there. But his obsession continued when he returned to North Carolina to attend graduate school at Duke University. For his master's thesis in history, which he finished in 1990, Tyson wrote "a more detached, historical account" of the murder and its impact on Oxford.

Beginnings of the book

For 12 years, he left the story alone — until one morning, at the age of 42, when he found himself writing the first chapter of what would

become his book. "I knew that I was finally ready," he said. As he was writing, Tyson talked nearly every day with his father. One day, a package arrived at his doorstep, containing his mother's diary and his father's journal, which helped him with the chronology of the story. "Blood Done Sign My Name" was published in 2004 and won the Southern Book Award.

After teaching for years at the University of Wisconsin, Tyson is back at Duke University, serving as a senior research scholar at the Center for Documentary Studies and a visiting professor of American Christianity and Southern Culture at Duke Divinity School. He also teaches in Duke's history department and at the University of North Carolina.

Tyson worships at Amity UMC in Chapel Hill and at the Duke University Chapel, "but I'm often found where my daddy happens to be preaching," he added.

Vernon Tyson, now 80 and serving as interim pastor at Elevation UMC in Benson accompanied his son to the Feb. 10 premiere of the movie version of *Blood Done Sign My Name*



Historian and author Timothy Tyson teaches a class at Duke University. He is the son of NC Conference elder, the Rev. Vernon Tyson. (Photo by Jon Gordiner, Duke University)

at the Pan-African Film and Arts Festival in Los Angeles. His mother, Martha Tyson, was unable to make the trip. She had commitments to her United Methodist Women unit at Edenton Street UMC, Raleigh.

Ministry of reconciliation

For United Methodist Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of Mississippi, "Blood Done Sign My Name" is both a Methodist story and a family story.

Ward grew up on a farm in eastern North Carolina and her sister, Perri Morgan, is married to Tyson. "The events of our lives mark us and form us. Tim's telling of his family story invites us into our stories

where we meet God still at work within and among us," Ward said. "This is a movie for every person who has experienced injustice, every clergy family, every lay person, everyone engaged in the ongoing journey of racial reconciliation," she said.

Tyson conducts his own type of "ministry of reconciliation" by visiting dozens of churches and high schools each year with Mary Williams, a gospel singer, to lead conversations about

race relations. "Even though many things have changed, we're still very segregated," he said. "We still haven't resolved the tension between the gospel and the social realities of our own lives." Tyson believes the film will have a similar effect on others. "I hope that church folks will find this film challenging and inspiring and engaging and that it will open up a fruitful conversation, not only about race and a history that we're still wrestling with, but about the challenges that confront us as Christians today," Tyson said.

* Linda Bloom is a UM News Service news writer based in New York.

Justin Blachowski
Church Mutual Regional Representative

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Academy Day of Learning	3
Excited about youth ministries.	4
Special Sundays in April & May	9
May Bible Study	12
Annual Conference updates.	15



CHANGE THE WORLD

Sleep out to end malaria encouraged as part of UMC's Change the World weekend

The United Methodist Church is marking this year's World Malaria Day, April 25, with a call to local churches to "Sleep Out to End Malaria" on the weekend of April 24-25.

The sleep out events – in which individuals sleep overnight under imitation bed nets – coincide with the denomination's official launch of Imagine No Malaria, an initiative that seeks to raise \$75 million to eliminate death and suffering from malaria in Africa by 2015.

"The United Methodist Church is committed to being a key player in



Build community locally.
Fight malaria globally.

the global movement to eliminate the worst effects of this deadly disease," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "This event is a unique way to raise awareness and build unity around the idea that we can make a sweeping difference on the African continent."

The United Methodist Church is encouraging local churches to participate in the Sleep Out to End Malaria as part of a unified action for World Malaria Day in partnership with the United Nations Foundation and the

global malaria community.

Sleep outs provide a teaching opportunity for youth and help them to connect to families in Africa.

Directions for holding a sleep out are available online at www.ImagineNoMalaria.com. Included are instructions for making bed nets, ideas for using the event as a malaria fundraiser, worship resources, and more.

"Sleep Out to End Malaria" events are among the many service and awareness-building events planned by United Methodist churches worldwide during The United Methodist Church's first-ever Rethink Church Change the World event, April 24-25. (For more information, see article on page 1.)

GOD'S RENEWED CREATION
call to hope and action

Bishops launch expanded site

The United Methodist Council of Bishops announces the launch of a fully featured website dedicated to "God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope & Action," its most recent pastoral letter which was adopted in November 2009.

The web site, www.hopeandaction.org, offers news, resources, social networking links, study guides with session resources, video and other visual tools for presentations or group settings. The content is designed to enable United Methodists to address issues of pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence.

As leaders of the 11.3 million member global United Methodist Church, the Bishops issue major statements on critical issues affecting church and society. This new pastoral letter is a successor to their landmark message from the Cold War era, "In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace."

Today's pastoral call to hope and action urges action and recognition that God's Creation is in crisis: silence cannot continue, and human kind must change their ways of being in the world. The letter contains nine pledges made by each bishop for hopeful, robust and transforming change.

These pledges are based on three years of research by the council. The bishops held hearings with issue specialists and theologians, and sponsored focus groups, online surveys, and listening events with over 5,000 members of the church around the world.

The biblical and theological teachings of the church and social justice policies adopted by the General Conference are the foundation for their reflection on the three threats emphasized in the message: pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of violence

**APRIL
24-25 2010
A WEEKEND
THAT WILL
CHANGE
THE WORLD**

WHAT IF...

on one weekend all around the world, 11 million United Methodists came together to work in their local communities?

WHAT IF...

we unite globally to eliminate a preventable, treatable disease that kills one child every 30 seconds?

WOULD YOU HELP?

On April 24-25, 2010, faithful Christians across the world will join hands in service locally and globally. Get involved by working with your neighbors (April 24), and recognizing World Malaria Day (April 25) through Change the World, a connectional event of The United Methodist Church.

"Even our smallest churches can have incredible impact when they leave their four

walls to serve the needs of their neighbors, alongside their neighbors." Rev. Mike Slaughter, lead pastor of Ginghamburg UMC and author of "Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus"

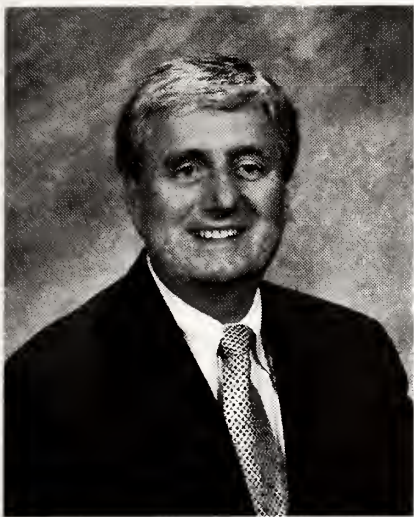
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See "God's renewed creation," pg. 6



Richard L. Stone III

Stone new D.S.

Continued from page 1

superintendent.

Following the practice of previous years, Stone will sit with the Cabinet during the appointment process. "I feel extra affirmation and appreciation from Bishop Gwinn with this appointment," Stone said. He earned his bachelors degree at UNC-Pembroke and M.Div. at Duke Divinity School.

In addition to serving since 2006 as pastor at Fuquay-Varina, Stone served as a student pastor 1980-81 in the Bahama area at Ellis Chapel, and then full-time pastorates 1981-97 in the Laurinburg area at Caledonia-Jones, in 1987-93 at Wendell in Wake County, 1993-98 at Horne Memorial in Clayton, 1998-2001 at St. Andrews in Garner, and 2001-2006 at Kitty Hawk.

He and his wife, Diane, recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They have two adult children and six grandchildren.

"Diane and I lived in Kitty Hawk for five years. We feel it is a wonderful opportunity to go back to an area we love," Stone said.

"I look forward to serving with the pastors of the Elizabeth City District and to be a part of the ministerial team of that district. My plans are to visit pastors and worship with them on a regular basis and offer them encouragement in their ministry."

New conference headquarters dedication set

The dedication service for the new United Methodist Building in Garner (Greenfield Park) has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 6 at 3 p.m. More details will be available later.

Transformational leadership is focus of Academy for Leadership Excellence's "Day of Learning"

By Para Drake *

Filling the large hall at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh, approximately 170 women and men with a heart for transformational leadership ministry shared the anticipation of hearing from one of contemporary Methodism's most dynamic leaders and speakers, the Rev. Jorge Acevedo, on Tuesday, March 2.

His topic, "Being a Transformational Leader" was presented as a "Day of Learning" offered by the Academy of Leadership Excellence to bring top speakers and transformational leaders to the NC Conference for the purpose of resourcing the ministry of congregations.

Introduced by Bishop Al Gwinn as his "own pastor" when away in Florida, he said Acevedo's delight is in introducing people to Jesus.

Acevedo began with a "conversation" by telling the story of his 14 years of ministry in Coral Gables, FL as he brought focus into his intentionally-rooted Wesleyan work of transformational evangelism.

Having been sent to a declining congregation with heavy debt, Acevedo described his leadership and commitment to partnering with members as the first steps toward the transformation into a four-campus community that today serves more than 2600 every weekend in worship, small group ministries, and active mission and outreach.

Acevedo's ministry with transforming congregations today goes beyond his local responsibility into the denomination's ministry of teaching congregations and the pastors who serve them with a team of

lay ministers.

The 2001 recipient of the Denman Evangelism Award (FL), Acevedo was also named the 2009 Distinguished Evangelist of the UMC by the Foundation for Evangelism.

He freely described his journey, at age 17, from a life of addiction into the grace of God and, in his education and training, the ministry of recovery that hallmarks Grace's campuses.

His authentic witness to God's transformation in his own life speaks to the reality of God's desire for transformation and new life for "the whole world."

He noted, in the "Art of Being the Kind of Leader God Uses," that the anointing, not ordination, is critical - God's Spirit must be acknowledged, obeyed, and cultivated by focusing on Jesus and making Him famous.

He spoke of the DNA of Grace, "We are unashamedly Jesus-centered," as he noted in Acts 4:12, "There is salvation in no one else."

Showing an image of his family, Acevedo reminded participants of the ministry with all relationships.

He recognized the potential misinterpretation of transformational work as "easy," working from the perspective of the 14th year.

He was careful to note the singularity of location, ministry, and context: through each person, place, and congregation, the Spirit of God is the mover - the transformation of one congregation will not look like another.

Congregational leaders must find their own way through this hard work. He assured the Academy participants, God's Spirit will lead - it's up to the faithful to follow.

The day-long event featured some "nuts and bolts" that begin the ministry: Focus on our product - what is our business?

For Grace, according to Acevedo, "Our business is transformed lives." God answered the prayer, "Lord, send us the people nobody wants."

He reminded, "Jesus said, 'healthy people don't need a doctor - sick people do. We exist for the outsider, not the insider.'"

He compared the work of "turn-around-church" to "plant-a-church" as being as difficult, if not more so, because of the presence of practices and people that enabled the decline.

He stressed that "People are going to leave, but it's up to you to choose the reason why (they leave)."

In Grace's ministry today, one in three come from a recovering community; 75% come to know Jesus for the first time: The culture of Grace is one of being "rabid for Jesus."

Acevedo does not advocate change for the sake of change; rather, his focus is upon the function - "business of transformed lives" and then, the form - how this will happen.

In Grace's reinvention of church language for structure, ministry, and process, he explained that Grace's "playbook" holds the structure and decision-making process that encourages transformation from "What does the Pastor say?" to "What does the Playbook say?"

Citing Patrick Lencioni's book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Acevedo notes that systems create trust or distrust.

The *UM Book of Discipline* gives

See "Transformational," page 6



The Rev. Jorge Acevedo (second from left), lead pastor of Grace Church, a multi-site, United Methodist congregation in Southwest Florida (Cape Coral, Fort Myers Shores and North Fort Myers) was the main presenter for "Being a Transformational Leader," the Academy's March 2 "Day of Learning." Over the last 13 years, Grace has grown from a weekend attendance of less than 400 to over 2600. It has also been recognized as having one of the largest and most effective recovery ministries in the U.S. Assisting in the presentation were two laity from Grace Church: Jim Nowiein and Toni Marzella. Shown are (L-R) Nowiein, Acevedo, Marzella, and Brian Gentle, executive director of the Academy for Leadership Excellence.

Commentary: Get excited about the future of youth ministries

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following commentary was written by Jimmy Crayton, an adult volunteer youth leader at Greater Heights UMC in Clayton and a volunteer in Conference youth ministry. Bishop Al Gwinn,

resident bishop of the NC Conference, and the Rev. Carol Goehring, conference executive director of connectional ministries and church revitalization, attended the Conference Children and Youth Ministry meeting on March 6 to

talk about the recent conference staff restructure. Youth have voiced concern that the director of youth ministries position has been eliminated. After the meeting, Crayton wrote an open letter that appeared on the NC Conference Youth Facebook group. In the letter, Crayton refers to a goose analogy and a story about the alpha ape which were shared by Bishop Gwinn. Both stories were about change in response to action outside the group, change that requires new approaches to address existing circumstances. The letter is as written.)

This is the gist: our local churches are hurting. Some are even dying. The former model under which the conference was operating was struggling to provide support for these dying churches.

Keep in mind that "healthy" churches, those that draw in new members and those that pay their respected apportionments, keep the conference going.

There are many churches out there that aren't able to do that because the membership is either leaving and going to other churches or dying.

The Bishop offered statistics to support that in 40 years, at the going trend, there will not be a United Methodist Church.

While they do concede that the NC Conference is strong in comparison to many others, and the conference youth ministry is among the strongest in the country, they offer the following stat: The current teenage generation is the largest generation that the United States has ever seen. The current generation of youth is the product/offspring of the Baby Boomers so naturally there are more now than then.

In 1974 there were 20,000 United Methodist Youth in the NC Conference, these were Baby Boomers. There are currently 9,000 in our conference. 6,000 of them were at Pilgrimage this past November. These are the children of the Baby Boomers.

Those numbers tell us two things. We are a rocking youth ministry when it comes to involving and serving the youth that we have.

But it also shows that we, as a conference, are failing in keeping memberships, thus resulting in much lower numbers of members/youth.

Something has got to change at the local church level or not only will the local church close its doors, we as a denomination, to include conference youth ministry will have to

See "Youth ministries," page 11

letters to the EDITOR

On the church and health care

I heard Nancy Pelosi credit "The United Methodist Church" with supporting passage of health care reform late last night (March 21) as Barbara and I happily watched on C-Span, and while rejoicing, realized Speaker Pelosi had misspoken herself as politicians sometimes say of comments they make and later have to correct, and that probably lots of folks would not be pleased, so I understand the need to issue clarifications the next day. However, I hope we will go beyond this denial/clarification and also tell our constituents the following:

1. The UMC through its Social Principles, GBCS, UMW, and GBGM has long been a supporter of health care reform, and probably our Council of Bishops has also endorsed this at various points over the years.
2. Most mainline denominations, or components thereof, share this position with our agencies.
3. Many state Councils of Churches have also endorsed this legislation.
4. The American Medical Association and America's largest organization of Roman Catholic Nuns also support it.
5. The United Methodist Church includes in its membership those who both support and oppose this action by Congress, and that's okay.

I hope this will also be shared with our Conference to help explain why so many Christian groups have adopted this position over most of our lifetimes. As you know from my speeches at Annual Conference, I have long wanted our nation to stop being the only Western one without such a safety net for the health care of its citizens. And I rejoice in the likelihood of this legislation soon becoming the law of the land.

Grace and Peace, Charles M. Smith, Durham

Informative and inspirational

The Adult Bible Study is my favorite part of the Christian Advocate. However, I must say in the March issue, where I found articles to be informative, I also found inspiration in the articles, "Young clergywomen blaze new trails, inspire next generation of girls," "Song Inspire Hope," and "Life-experience of United Methodist family lead to book and film exploring NC history and the journey of racial reconciliation."

Thank you, Katie Robinson



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

Commentary: Who speaks for The United Methodist Church?

Health care debate raises questions about church's voice

By Rich Peck *

(UMNS) — The debate over health-care reform has touched off deep emotions in the U.S. public, and it has sparked a separate, equally passionate set of reactions among United Methodists.

As Congress grappled with the legislation during the weekend of March 20-21, many United Methodists were surprised to hear U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi cite the church as a supporter of reform. On her website, she more specifically listed a church agency, the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), in a long roll of organizations supporting reform.

In the days that followed, United Methodist leaders fielded calls and e-mails from church members who were either elated or angry about the church's role. Many were confused. Who decided The United Methodist Church supports health-care

reform? Why is my church involved in a political issue? What authority does GBSCS have to speak for the church?

The controversy over health-care reform creates a timely opportunity for answering those questions.

General Conference speaks

The United Methodist Church speaks through its General Conference, a legislative assembly that meets every four years. About 1,000 delegates from around the world gather to set policy and act on other business on behalf of the 11 million-member denomination.

General Conference delegates are elected by their regional conferences. They represent the cultural, political and theological diversity of the church. The U.S. delegates, for example, include Republicans, Democrats and independents.

The United Methodist Church has a long tradition of speaking on current issues and world problems, dating back to the earliest days of the Methodist movement and its founder John Wesley.

Every General Conference since 1972 has adopted and updated a set of

Social Principles that addresses contemporary issues from a biblical and theological foundation. The principles are not considered church law. They are "intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit." The principles are a "call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice."

There is no requirement for church members to agree with the Social Principles, and they have every right to disagree with legislative action based on those principles.

Since situations change, each General Conference also adopts resolutions addressing specific problems and opportunities. These resolutions, based on the Social Principles, are included in a *Book of Resolutions*. The 2008 volume contains over 1,000 pages; 20 pages address health-care issues.

Statements on health care

General Conference has spoken many times on health care-related concerns over the years. The Social Principles, also addressed to nations in Africa, Asia and Europe, declare, "We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens

with health care."

The 2008 General Conference reaffirmed concerns expressed by previous sessions about the number of uninsured Americans and the cost of insurance that keeps minorities in the poverty cycle. During its meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, the legislative body advocated for "a comprehensive health-care delivery system that includes access for all, quality care and effective management of costs."

Noting that the nation is divided on the philosophical bases for addressing America's health-care delivery problems, the assembly supported "state-level initiatives that become laboratories for trying out varying approaches to providing health care for all."

Finally, the gathering charged GBSCS "with primary responsibility for advocating health care for all in the United States Congress and for communicating this policy to United Methodists in the USA."

Board of Church & Society

Operating from a building across the street from the U.S. Capitol and

See "Who speaks" page 7

Vote affirms UMC health care stance

Continued from page 1

While it has historically supported access to health care for all, the denomination's top lawmaking assembly did not act on the specific legislation. General Conference, held every four years, last met in 2008.

Differing opinions

United Methodists, like most Americans, have taken different positions on the basic legislation approved by the House. Opponents of the legislation cited its cost, its expansion of federal power and concerns it would reverse past policy by allowing federal funding of abortions.

The United Methodist Church is third among religious groups in the total number of members of the 111th Congress. Among its 44 members in the House, 26 voted no; 18 voted yes.

Palmer rejoices

Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, said he "rejoiced" at the passage of the bill because it aligns with the values of The United Methodist Church.

Though the denomination's chief legislative body, the General Conference, has taken no stand, it has been a strong advocate for universal health care. The United Methodist Church in its law book states: "We

believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care."

The 2008 United Methodist Book of Resolutions adds: "In the United States today, however, fulfillment of this duty is thwarted by simultaneous crises of access, quality, and cost. The result of these crises is injustice to the most vulnerable, increased risk to health care consumers, and waste of scarce public and private resources."

Resolution 3201 in the United Methodist Book of Resolutions charges the United Methodist Board of Church and Society with primary responsibility for advocating health care for all in the United States Congress. The resolution was approved by the 2008 General Conference, the denomination's highest policy-making body.

Paul Brown, a senior at Duke Divinity School, called for unity amid disagreement.

"Sisters and brothers, our unity is grounded in Jesus Christ—not in the details of health care reform," he wrote on the denomination's Facebook site. "As a church that includes both Hillary Clinton and George W. Bush as members, we are free to disagree on various social issues, but we remain united in one Lord, one faith, and one baptism."

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God's renewed creation

Continued from page 2

and weapons.

The Council encourages congregations and groups to read aloud the Pastoral Letter in worship or group settings and gather in small groups to use the Guide for Group Study.

The group study would be particularly appropriate during the weeks April 18-May 23 around the 40th anniversary of Earth Day (April 22), according to Pat Callbeck Harper, project manager for God's Renewed Creation.

The expanded web site also allows individuals and groups to report their own action plans in response to the bishops' nine pledges for transforming action in the Pastoral Letter.

Bishop Jane Middleton, in announcing the expanded website, said: "Rather than telling the church what we should do, the bishops, with God's help, will be showing by our example."

God's Renewed Creation is a response to General Conference's request that the Council of Bishops update for this time the 1986 landmark Pastoral Letter In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis & a Just Peace.

Bishop Middleton, who is a member of the board of directors of the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), offered a special thanks to her colleagues on the board and the staff for their contributions in helping get the project off the ground. "The bishops are not a program agency," she said. "So we have depended on the generosity of the general agencies to put wheels under this project since General Conference set this in motion."

GBCS provided administrative support for the project manager, said Middleton. "We also have received two Peace with Justice grants in the past two years." She said the funding covered a good portion of the costs of launching the hopeandaction.org website, and covered the significant costs of having the documents translated into five additional languages.

For more information about God's Renewed Creation, visit hopeandaction.org (www.hopeandaction.org) or contact Pat Callbeck Harper at pharper@umc-gbcs.org or (202) 488-5631.



During the "Being a Transformational Leader" presentation, the Rev. Jorge Acevedo (left) speaks with the Rev. Terry Bryant, pastor of Asbury UMC in Raleigh, and Jim Nowiein of Grace UMC in Coral Gables, FL.

Transformational leadership training

Continued from page 3

latitude to the structure that frees ministry constraints so that the form can follow the function of ministry. The Playbook is accessible for all to "free ministry constraints (to be able to) trust each other to do what is needed."

"Picture a Preferred Future" encourages congregational leaders to seek "the picture of what we can be, building the bridge while walking on it," looking for the differences between "my church and God's Church in Scripture," to begin the journey toward God's purpose and plan.

"An honest assessment," according to Acevedo, will begin the process of embracing the present reality, often bringing to light the hard facts the congregation needs to acknowledge. He noted, "To lead a local church, pastors need to be honest, not 'nice.'" "The truth," Acevedo quotes, "will set us free."

Disappointments peppered the reality of Grace's "turn-around," but they did not stop the effort to respond to God's purpose faithfully.

Though at times seeming elusive, small group formation, developing the spiritual base, the hard work to reach the lost for Jesus, and the investment in relationships with the volunteer staff are critical, noted Acevedo. Sharing the stories of God's changing lives from the pulpit, along with the patience that comes from a three-year timeline to integrate "those people" in Recovery with the rest of Grace proved to be challenges vitally faced.

The realization that "People don't have to have their way; they have to have their way considered" meant that decisions by staff and leaders made months in advance of the announcement were shaped in a way that heard other ways.

Admonishing the system of voting, Acevedo pointed out that only two votes were taken in Scripture, resulting in Paul's shipwreck and Barrabus being chosen over Jesus.

In Grace's ministry, the welcom-

ing of "our mess is God's message" encourages all to "reach (those out there) – connect (others with serving others) – form (spiritually – 'you're only as sick as your secrets') – send (out for more)."

The fruit of Grace's labor is in the many new Christians being called, baptized, and attending the year round classes for new believers, the wired, and confirmation.

Acevedo and his team's overarching leadership theme for the day proved to be his own passion, "Always be a fully devoted disciple of Christ," reflecting John Wesley's own, to burn for Christ so that others will come for miles to watch.

Grace leaders Toni Marzella and Jim Nowiein brought into focus the necessity of a community of faith committed to allowing God to transform ministry into growing fruit for the Kingdom of God by serving others, looking outward, and allowing Scripture to reveal the way to the ministry of "transformed lives."

Traveling and teaching with Jorge Acevedo, they shared their experiences as charter members of Grace and leaders in Celebrate Recovery, Missions, and Marriage Ministry.

Before closing worship, the team encouraged the participants to ask themselves, "Which of these lessons are most needed and appropriate for my church? What would it take for me and my church?"

For more information, visit <http://www.egracechurch.com/>

The next Academy "Day of Learning" event, "Balancing Your Ministry, Renewing Your Life" will be held at Wrightsville Beach May 11-13.

It is designed for mid-career pastors, staff and laity and is limited to 40 participants. Scholarships are available. For further information, call (919) 208-2169 or e-mail lwiebsmith@nccumc.org.

* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and writes on assignment for the NCC Christian Advocate.

Greensboro College selects Czarda

By Lex Alexander *

Greensboro College has named Dr. Lawrence D. Czarda as its 18th president, capping an eight-month, nationwide search. Dr. Czarda will take office April 26.

Czarda is currently vice president for administration at Virginia's George Mason University, where he has worked since 1983. He was chosen from among three finalists, all of whom visited the campus in late February to meet with faculty, staff and students and to take questions at forums open to the entire college community.

"I think this position represents a unique fit of the college's needs and my skill set," Czarda said. "As I said at the forum, I saw all the 'You Belong Here!' banners hanging out front,

and it sounds corny, but it's true: I belong here. The potential to move forward at Greensboro College is an exceptional opportunity, and it is a distinct privilege to be chosen."

"The selection was difficult because there were so many excellent, well-prepared candidates," said the Rev. David Melton, a trustee and member of the search committee. "What set Dr. Czarda apart was a wonderful combination of experience, passion, communication skills and faith. He is not afraid of accepting the challenge of leading in the competitive environment private, liberal-arts institutions find themselves in, and we—the trustees—are more than confident in his ability to do so."

In addition to his administrative

See "Greensboro College," page 10

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Two NCC men certified to help churches expand ministries to men

NC Conference and Western NC Conference churches that want to expand their ministries to men now have four persons who are qualified to provide that help.

Allen Shaver and John Hall, members of Aldersgate UMC in Durham, became the third and fourth North Carolina men to be certified as a "men's ministry specialist." The men who previously qualified for the position are Neil Brown of Spruce Pine and Dick Strachan of Kings Mountain.

Following an intensive training experience, the men may lead a 12-hour training course: "Understanding Men's Ministry" based upon content and materials used by Orlando, Fla. based-Man in the Mirror in a 2½-day learning seminar.

Shaver and Hall were certified as men's ministry specialists in absentia by the General Commission on United Methodist Men at a March 5 commissioning service in Nashville.

In 2008, nine Aldersgate men participated in a No-Man-Left-Behind seminar led by Man in the Mirror where they learned how to transform the local unit into an intentional ministry focused on discipleship.

Allen Shaver

Shaver, a seven-year member of Aldersgate UMC, has served as chair of the Stewardship Committee and president of United Methodist Men.

In January, he was named hunger relief advocate for United Methodist Men of the North Carolina Conference. In this post, he will serve as the link between the conference and the Society of St. Andrew, a hunger relief agency based in Big Island, Va.

A 23-year veteran of the communications technology industry, Shaver has held leadership roles in software development, product management, business development, engineering services, and technical operations.

He is currently in charge of supply chain process management. The experiences have convinced him of the need to disciple men.

"Corporations and private businesses are filled with men who do not know the word of Christ, or who know the word but feel unable to live out Christ's teachings in the work place," he lamented.

Shaver and his wife, Kay, have two adopted children, Daniel in 2001 and Jonathan in 2004.

"Both were open adoptions where two courageous young women decided to give birth and entrust us to raise their newborns," he said. "Through this process, all of us grew in our faith in and understanding of God's love."



John Hall



Allen Shaver

John Hall

Hall, a 12-year member of Aldersgate UMC, serves as the lay leader of the 950-member congregation. He has also served on the Board of Trustees, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the Finance Committee and the Administrative Board. He also has taught DISCIPLE III and DISCIPLE IV, and he is a member of two small-group ministries.

Skilled in technology, he has led Aldersgate in the recording and distributing worship services, and he directed the audio, lighting, and production of special services such as Christmas and Easter.

He served as president of UM Men in 2004-2005, and has served as secretary/treasurer.

He now serves as president of the

Durham District UM Men.

He retired from Hewlett Packard in 2005 after 23 years as a technology development engineer, and he is currently a technical trainer at SAS Institute Inc. in Cary.

"My primary goal as a men's ministry specialist is to expand the definition and outreach of men's ministry, to meet men where they are in their walk with Christ and invite them to a deeper, more committed faith journey," said Hall.

He and his wife, Holly, have two children: Kimberly, who lives in New York City, and Chris, who attends college at Durham Technical Community College in the college transfer program. They live in Durham with their basset hound, Bogey.

Commentary: Who speaks for The United Methodist Church? From page 5

the Supreme Court building, GBCS's primary responsibility is to "seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns."

The 2008 General Conference reaffirmed concerns expressed by previous sessions about the number of uninsured Americans and the cost of insurance that keeps minorities in the poverty cycle. During its meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, the legislative body advocated for "a comprehensive health-care delivery system that includes access for all, quality care and effective management of costs."

Noting that the nation is divided on the philosophical bases for addressing America's health-care delivery problems, the assembly supported "state-level initiatives that become laboratories for

trying out varying approaches to providing health care for all."

Finally, the gathering charged GBCS "with primary responsibility for advocating health care for all in the United States Congress and for communicating this policy to United Methodists in the USA."

General Board of Church & Society Operating from a building across the street from the U.S. Capitol and the Supreme Court building, GBCS's primary responsibility is to "seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns."

Responding to that mandate in the United Methodist Book of Discipline, the agency continued to advocate for what it considered the best plan to provide health care for all Americans.

Jim Winkler, top staff executive for the agency, led efforts to pass legislation that would provide insurance that would provide such care.

In addition, several other United Methodist leaders, including Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, individually urged President Obama to pass health-care reform legislation months before the complex bill was made into law. At least five official and unofficial United Methodist organizations also advocated for reform.

No need for agreement

In Congress, the debate divided United Methodist representatives, with some supporting the bill and more opposing it.

Every United Methodist has a right to petition General Conference to amend the Social Principles. If a majority of delegates agree, the statements will be changed by the 2012 assembly. Pastors or district superintendents can supply information about the petition process.

Very little United Methodist money is involved in advocacy efforts. Only 3.1 cents of every dollar goes to support all the ministries of the denomination. Only a portion of that amount supports the entire program of the GBCS. Work on health care represents a small portion of the agenda of that agency. Withholding

funds from a local church cripples ministries around the world.

Church members have many options for expressing viewpoints and concerns in the church. They can directly contact their pastor, bishop, the appropriate general agency or one of the many church-affiliated organizations and unofficial groups that represent specific causes in the church.

* Richard Peck is a retired clergy member of the New York Annual Conference and a freelance writer in Nashville, TN.



People in support of universal health care rally at Centennial Park in Nashville, Tenn. (Photo by Jan Snider / UMNS)

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An Alternative Way To Travel With Someone You Can Trust

Spence family supports Camp Don Lee through special giving idea

By Dail D. Ballard *

On a warm, windswept summer afternoon, Penny Spence Raby, her sister, Lauren Spence Riddick and sister-in-law Gloria Spence began making plans for Christmas. The Spence family, originally from Elizabeth City and now spread out across various NC towns and counties traditionally celebrate Christmas together.

Each year, there is much chatter about their annual gathering at the family home in Elizabeth City on Christmas Eve Day, when the family picture will be taken, and of course discussions of Christmas wish lists for the family of now 25 members.

But this Christmas planning conversation on that warm day took a different path, a new twist as the sisters began talking about what they could do this year that would make an impact on the world.

The Spence family has always enjoyed giving. The late Mrs. Carolyn Massey Spence, mother of Raby and Riddick and son, Mark Spence, always enjoyed shopping for her

children and grandchildren. It was a treat for her to spend hours shopping looking for just the right gift for each family member.

Yet, this year, Penny, Lauren and Gloria decided that instead of spending all that time shopping, they were going to suggest to the rest of their family to consider pooling dollars from each family member to give to a charity. And, they would do this in memory of their mother, Carolyn Massey Spence. After a discussion with their brother, Mark Spence and father, William Milton Spence, everyone was in complete agreement about how they would make this Christmas very special.

The siblings made a Donation Basket available to all family members. The Spence family went about preparing their contributions to the Donation Basket. Penny Raby reported "It was amazing to learn how the young children in the family embraced this idea. They were excited to find ways to earn money so they could participate...like folding laundry and other chores. They even donated part of their allowance or



The 25-member Spence family was inspired to make an impact on the world through a combined Christmas gift donation rather than spending hours shopping. The adults as well as the children participated, and the children were excited to find ways to earn money and contribute. The family made their gift to Camp Don Lee in memory of Carolyn Massey Spence.

money from their savings."

Another basket, the Suggestion Basket was used where family members wrote down the name of a person or organization to which they would like to see the combined monies donated. At the Christmas family gathering, suggestions were put into the basket, and with the basket held high above Dr. Spence's head, he drew one of the suggestions with great anticipation from the entire family.

Penny Raby's suggestion, Camp Don Lee in Arapahoe, was chosen

much to the delight of the entire family. Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center has touched many of the Spence family members. Children have been campers and on staff. Grandchildren have attended camp as well. Raby adds, "Our family loved (Don Lee) from day one, and it was another piece of continuity in our lives as a family and our church."

Raby continued, "The staff, fellow campers and leadership at Don Lee have helped shape and define our children's faith. Don Lee has reinforced their spiritual lives and helped them keep their focus in a world so full of temptation and challenges. It is a safe, nurturing and caring place where they learn and grow with fellow Christians, and we are thankful for its positive influence on our children's lives."

Camp Don Lee received the Spence family gift. The entire family agrees that "Don Lee is a fabulous Christian ministry, and we hope this money will help you in your work."

Penny Spence Raby added, "This was my favorite part of Christmas this year!"

* Dail D. Ballard is development director of NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries.

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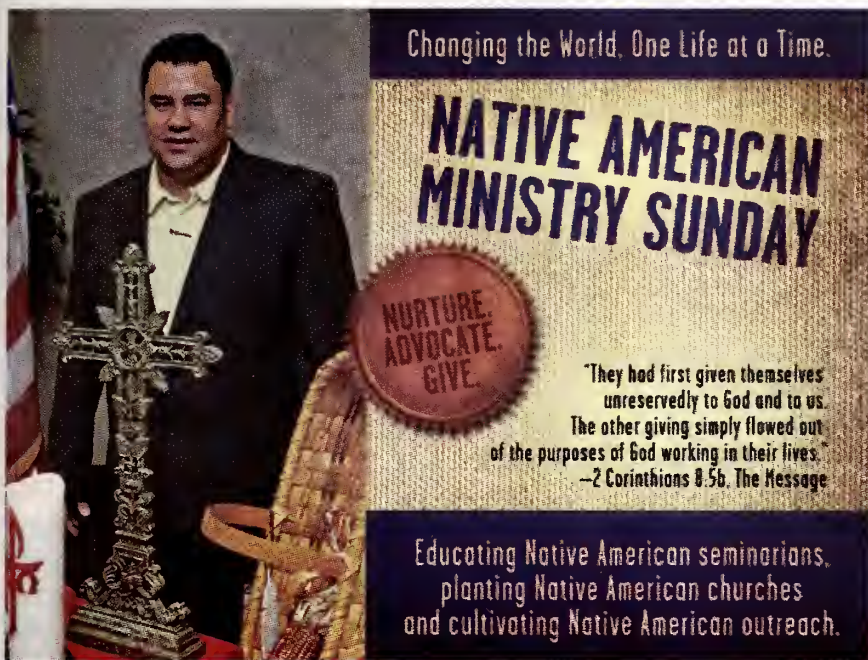
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BIRTHS

Ben (Burlington: Front Street associate) and Sarah Alexander announce the birth of a son, Thomas William Alexander, on Feb. 22.

Plan now and honor the United Methodist Special Sundays

General Conference created six unique Special Sundays to help congregations work with communities, rebuild lives, strengthen self-sufficiency, encourage partnerships, nurture Native American ministries, model peace and justice, provide scholarships and loans for United Methodist students, and much more.



April 18, 2010

"When I was in Seminary, I was honored to receive the Native American Seminary Award. To this day, it is one of the greatest honors bestowed upon me. The award is presented to Native American Students Earning a M.Div. or its equivalent at a United Methodist Senate Approved Seminary. It was a humbling experience to know that I had the approval and the support of the United Methodist Church and every local United Methodist Congregation who participates in the Native American Ministries Sunday Offering" ~ Matt Locklear (pastor of Sandy Plains UMC, Rockingham District)

Congregations are encouraged to give generously to the Native American Ministries Sunday offering. Native American Ministries Sunday is April 18, 2010 and donations can be made anytime throughout the year online at www.umciving.org/nams.

The funds collected allow The United Methodist Church to partner with existing native ministries and create programs on behalf of Native Americans. Money collected also supports seminary scholarships for United Methodist Native Americans.

Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to develop and strengthen local Native American ministries. In the North Carolina Conference, gifts to Native American Ministries Sunday offering benefit the 13 churches that comprise the Native American Coop, which provides support for church growth and community ministries.

In the last year, three of these Native American congregations grew dramatically in worship attendance, one continued to enroll children in a 4-star child care program, and their communities received health education for diabetes management and smoking cessation. Many Native American churches have been blessed to receive grants for items such as hymnals, Bibles, children's ministries and handicap access renovation.

According to *The Book of Discipline* 2008 (Par. 263.6), "This Sunday serves to remind the Church of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society." The *Discipline* also states that each local church "shall designate...a minimum of one person...to represent the need for better awareness of Native American contributions to the local church." (Par. 654)

"When I was in Seminary, I was honored to receive the Native American Seminary Award. To this day, it is one of the greatest honors bestowed upon me." – the Rev. Matt Locklear, NC Conference

For more information visit www.umciving.org/nams



May 30, 2010

Established by the 1988 General Conference, Peace with Justice Sunday enables the denomination's voice in advocating for peace and justice at home and around the world. The day witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world.

Peace with Justice Sunday is a way people can give from a place of faith, according to Adrienne Fong, Peace with Justice coordinator, California-Nevada Conference. "I know there are many times people give to non-faith organizations that do human rights, peace and environmental justice work, but if they knew they could give from within the church," she emphasized, "I think they would. It makes me really proud to be United Methodist because we address so many issues through the Special Sunday offerings, especially Peace with Justice."

Half of the offerings collected are retained by the annual conference to fund local peace with justice programs. Half of the offering is remitted to the General Board of Church and Society to help fund U.S. and global work in social action, public-policy education and advocacy.

Peace with Justice Sunday gifts empower compassionate people to advocate for human rights, buy fair-trade products, care for the environment, demonstrate for important causes, eradicate poverty, feed the hungry, mediate conflict provide health care, seek affordable housing and model nonviolence. The Special Sunday offering funds global outreach through the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and annual conference-related peace with justice ministries that transform lives.

This offering allows the Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs:

- Peace Kids in Los Angeles, CA, teaches inner-city children tools to handle tough situations and how to stand up for themselves.
- In Liberia—in partnership with other religious and humanitarian groups, The United Methodist Church provides a place for former child soldiers to live, recreational activities to address war trauma, and necessities such as fresh drinking water and medical treatment.

The *Book of Discipline* calls for a peace with justice coordinator to be assigned by every annual conference to act as primary coordinator of Peace with Justice resources, interpretation and advocacy.

The coordinator links local churches in the annual conference with the GBCS Peace with Justice Program. Peace with Justice Coordinators meet annually for spiritual growth, empowerment and program resourcing.

"Now I know how to help other people and act like Jesus. I tell my friends to be kind to each other, to teachers and to the Earth because we all should be peacemakers." – Jessica, Peace Kids camper

For more information visit www.umciving.org/pwjs

Greensboro College selects Czarda

Continued from page 6

duties, Czarda has served on both the undergraduate and graduate faculties at George Mason for more than 20 years, with particular focus on finance issues in public administration and sports economics. He has served on doctoral-dissertation committees and as a faculty adviser to undergraduates and master's candidates.

Prior to his current position, Czarda served at George Mason in capacities including vice president for regional campuses, vice president for operations and chief of staff. He also has held senior finance positions for local governments in Fauquier and Prince William counties in Virginia.

He has chaired the Fauquier Health System Board of Trustees and the boards of its subsidiary corporations, served on the board of the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy and The Highland School, and chaired the Fauquier County School Board. He also has held leadership positions in the United Methodist Church, youth athletic organizations and the Boy Scouts.

Czarda holds a B.A. in history and political science from Bridgewater



Dr. Lawrence D. Czarda

College, a master's in public administration from American University, and a Ph.D. in public policy from George Mason.

Czarda is married to Carolyn Dulaney Chappell, a senior administrator at Randolph-Macon Academy and adjunct faculty member at Lord Fairfax Community College. Their blended family includes seven children and six grandchildren.

His personal interests include athletics, art, drumming, reading, travel and farm work.

Czarda succeeds Craven E. Williams, who retired in July. Since September, C. Brent DeVore, president emeritus of Otterbein College in Ohio, has served as Greensboro College's interim president.

* Lex Alexander is director of external relations at Greensboro College.

Marriage Prayer events aid thriving relationships

By Rick Hebert *

Two "Evening For Couples" events have been held at First UMC-Cary, and St. James UMC in Greenville, in partnership with Man in the Mirror Ministries of Orlando, FL.

These events emphasized the importance of prayer in marriage, and featured the elements that build thriving marriages.

The Cary event, which included a catered dinner, was sponsored by the United Methodist Men.

The Greenville event featured coffee and dessert, and was co-sponsored by the Men of Purpose and St. James' small group ministry.

Both programs were led by David Delk, president of Man in the Mirror Ministries, and co-author of "The Marriage Prayer."

A total of 30 couples were at the Cary location, held in late January, and 56 couples attended the Greenville event, in late February.

"The Marriage Prayer" was written by Patrick Morley and Delk, and features a 68-word prayer that husbands and wives are encouraged to pray daily for each other.

Marriage prayer cards were distributed to couples in the two churches, with the question, "what might God do if you said a simple prayer every day for your spouse?"

Publicity for the events challenged every couple in the two churches to take a "21-day marriage prayer challenge" – praying the marriage prayer for their spouse every day for 21 days.

Couples in the two churches considered this question: "what might God do if every married person in



David Delk, president of the Man in the Mirror Ministries, teaches the class in Greenville.

your church prayed for their spouse every day?"

Six-week follow-up groups were offered in both churches to study "The Marriage Prayer" with other couples.

The book includes six sections, which are organized for small group study: Faithfulness, Priorities, Purpose, Unity, Attitude, and Goal.

More than one person in attendance made this comment: "the overwhelming interest and response to this event make clear the need for this emphasis, and the importance of building strong marriages in our church." Another said, "we have never had an event like this at our church – it was a wonderful evening to celebrate our marriage relationships!"

For information on how your church can sponsor a "Marriage Prayer" event, contact the Rev. William Green at First Church-Cary (wgreen@fumc-cary.org), Rick Hebert at St. James-Greenville (rhebert@suddenlink.net), or Pam Adkins with Man in the Mirror Ministries (PamAdkins@maninthemirror.org).

Additional information is available at www.themarriageprayer.org.

* Rick Hebert is the coordinator for the Men of Purpose, the men's discipleship ministry at St. James UMC in Greenville.

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PT CONTEMPORARY Musician - Front Street UMC, Burlington, is looking for a contemporary worship musician. Position includes leadership of praise band and singers in weekly rehearsals and Sunday worship (9:00 am), participation in chancel choir and rehearsals, planning worship with pastors. Strong keyboard skills are preferred. Approximately 18 hrs/wk. Position available mid-May. For full job description or to apply, email: mrold@nccumc.org

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Commentary: Youth Ministries have strong future

Continued from page 4

close up shop as well.

I don't like it but drastic times call for drastic measures. Unfortunately for those 5 people at the conference level that meant very drastic.

So what does this new structuring mean for Conference Youth Ministry?

The biggest thing is that we are now in control. It is ours to enhance, leave the same or let falter. I chose to enhance it. We no longer have our Sue Ellen holding the reigns nor will we have anyone in the immediate future. What's done is done. But the conference has no intention on doing away with conference youth events and neither should you be ready to concede any of them.

The powers that be would love nothing more than to see conference youth events continue to thrive and provide amazing opportunities for the youth.

They want to use Conference youth ministry as a tool to help grow youth ministries in the local church, which can be very exciting. It is going to be what we make it.

The burden is now on the youth and the adult leadership within our "family."

Yes, that IS a load for us to bear. We can do it. We will do it. It will take every single one of us, but we will do it.

We are now blessed with an opportunity to do great and wonderful things for the kingdom of God. I say bring it.

I know some of you are thinking: "If our conference youth ministry is so strong why cut that position?" Trust me when I tell you that the conference did not WANT to cut any of the positions. The changes they made are necessary to strengthen our local church and our denomination. "Why can't they do both?" Simply put: money. We can't afford both. No the entire restructuring is not about saving money or making money. It is about the local church and the members of the local church are who make up conference youth events. The most important thing is shifting the focus to the local church and unfortunately that meant cutting some of the most fruitful ministries. Hopefully if the new structuring begins to bear fruit as expected we will be able to hire a conference youth coordinator again.

My heart absolutely breaks for Sue Ellen. It breaks for all of us tied so closely to her. No one did it better than she did.

The greatest thing she did could be that she formed a team that is fully capable of carrying on as she did. The right people are in the right places to keep conference youth ministry going strong. She equipped us to challenge

ourselves to make things better. You have to see God in that.

Coach Pat Riley said: "When you face a fork in the road, step on the accelerator."

It's time to step on the gas people, to floor it. It's time to rev up our hearts and minds and carry God's plan forward. That is what Sue Ellen wants. It's what God wants.

As I said earlier we as the conference youth leadership, youth and adult, are running the show. That can be a little scary but if we earnestly let God guide us in this endeavor, great and wonderful things are going to happen.

If we don't and we seek the path WE think is best, or we don't give it everything we have, we are certain to fail.

Honestly, I think the conference is willing to let that happen. Not because they don't care about the youth ministry, but because they rightly care about the greater good and that is strengthening the local church and our denomination.

We cannot fail. Everyone has to step up and carry some of this load. God has His hand on us. We can not give up hope. We are going to do great, great, great things.

Get excited people. Get fired up.

"Our only limit to the realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today." - F.D.R.

Trust in God and trust in each other. This family is going to make it!!!!

Mad Crazy Love!

Jimmy Crayton

Whole person wellness opportunities offered

By Janet Balasko *

In 1 Corinthians 10:31, there is a call to keep minds, bodies, and spirits connected to God: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (NIV)

In today's world, job struggles, caring for families, and life stresses take a toll on health and well being.

Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lung disease are the leading causes of death in North Carolina. The question one might ask is, "How do followers of Christ remember that the '...body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?'"

In addition to wellness options listed in the March "NCCC Advocate," two new spiritual and physical wellness opportunities are available. For cost information, to schedule a class, or to inquire about either program, contact the Rev. Janet Balasko at jbalasko@nccumc.org.

1) Gene Smart – Living Abundantly

This nine-week class is designed to revolutionize the way individuals feel about their health, exercise, prayer (spiritual life or practices) and eating habits. Two levels of participation are offered: Platinum (\$349) and Gold (\$199). Both offer the same resources and instructions. The Platinum level also has advanced blood tests

The class is based upon the research and principles outlined in "The Gene Smart Diet," by Dr. Floyd Chilton, professor of physiology at Wake Forest University. The class is offered in collaboration with CareNet of North Carolina, a statewide outpatient faith-integrated counseling

network of North Carolina Baptist Hospital. CareNet has been endorsed by the NC Conference Commission on Clergy Counseling and Consultation to provide services for clergy and local churches.

Both class levels explore the relationship between a person's genes and their diet as well as integrating the role of a healthy mind, body, and spirit to achieve a life lived abundantly. They also include a program to provide ongoing support after the initial nine weeks.

Participants can complete specialized blood testing that assesses targeted health risk areas with a specific emphasis on ways to embrace the role of God in their lives. Participants are supported in their goals to lose weight, reduce their dependence on certain

medicines, acquired increased energy and enjoy improved self image.

2) Mind, Body, and Spirit Wellness

This 4-hour seminar is an opportunity for the laity and clergy of the NC Conference. The seminar emphasizes the importance of keeping mind, body, and spirit in balance. Four sessions are included: 1) Spiritual wellness 2) Nutrition, 3) Emotional Aspects of Eating, and 4) a Workout.

Led by Jennifer Russomanno, a certified personal trainer, and the Rev. Janet Balasko, the Mind, Body, and Spirit Wellness Seminar is available to individual churches or districts with a minimum of 10 participants required.

* Janet Balasko is an elder in the NC Conference, serving at Buckhorn UMC.

DEATHS

YOW, Carl, a retired elder from the Virginia Annual Conference who served churches in the North Carolina Conference, died Feb. 12. A memorial service was held on Feb. 16 at Edenton UMC.

ESDALE, Jane, Director of Robeson County Church and Community Center in Lumberton, NC, died Feb. 24. A funeral service was held Feb. 27 at First Baptist Church in Lumberton.

VICK, Catharine Allen died Feb. 25. She was the widow of Marvin Vick.

CHRISMON, Harold M. "Pete" (Raleigh: retired) died March 7. The funeral was held March 12 at Apex UMC.

Support needed to address scholarship funding shortfalls

A 13 percent decline in giving to Student Day, coupled with increases in eligible applicants and reductions in other funds means several hundred United Methodist scholarship applicants are likely to be disappointed this year – unless significant donations are made online before June, said Angella Current-Felder, executive director of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Office of Loans and Scholarships.

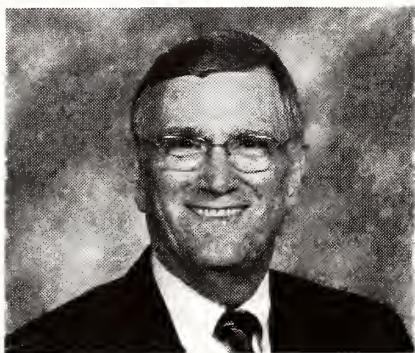
Current-Felder said last year 469 students who were eligible for scholarships did not receive

money because funds were not available, and she fears even more will be turned down this year.

Scholarship applications for the Karen Layman Gift of Hope Scholarship for undergraduates has more than tripled to over 9,000.

"We know that we will have more than 700 eligible applicants for the Gift of Hope Scholarship, and we will only be able to make awards to about 300," Current-Felder said. The office has already received 2,100 applications, and

See "Scholarships support," page 15



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

May 2, 2010

Text: Colossians 1:1-14

"A Faithful Community"

There are a ton of theological dimensions in this text. Prayer (v. 3). Faith (v. 4). Love (v. 4). Hope (v. 5). Heaven (v. 5). Truth (v. 5). Gospel (v. 5). Fruit (v. 6). Grace (v. 6). Minister (v. 7). Christ (v. 7). Spirit (v. 8). Power (v. 11). Patience (v. 11). Thanks (v. 12). Saints (v. 12). Sins (v. 14). Forgiveness (v. 14).

Oh, yes. Also Servant (v. 7). Knowledge (v. 9). Father (v. 12). Apostle (v. 1). Brother (v. 1). Peace (v. 2). Lord (v. 3). Word (v. 5). Work (v. 10). Grow (v. 10). Endure (v. 11). Inheritance (v. 12). Light (v. 12). Wisdom (v. 9). Kingdom (v. 13). Redemption (v. 14).

Come to think of it, when God touches a people, a place, a problem, a situation, what is not theological?

Is there a road on the journey where God cannot find us?

No wonder that Paul's letter to the church at Colossae (a large and diverse city) is filled with so much that marks God's presence among a people, a presence in a place, a presence with a problem, and a presence in every situation.

One might think that Paul had a lot of close ties with the faithful in Colossae, but he had never even been there. His closeness is based on what he knew of their faithfulness (1:4) and the closeness that comes from praying for someone (1:9). There is power in that recognition! Praying for someone can move us closer to them, even though we never make a geographic step.

Note that in verses 7 and 8, Paul gives credit to Epaphras for solid teaching and faithfulness.

Sad to say, sometimes we tend to be a bit jealous and envious of other church leaders. Have you ever thought (as I have) "If I was willing to lower my standards as much as he has, I could have those kinds of numbers?"

Paul sets us a good example of seeing value and beauty and fruit in the ministry of someone else.

There is a lot happening in these

few verses but Paul is clear that God is the one who has made it possible. God has enabled (v. 12). God has rescued (v. 13). God has transferred (v. 13). No wonder Paul says to give thanks (v. 12)!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Dynamics of Faith* (Harper), Paul Tillich wrote of how God is present: "The mysterious character of the holy produces an ambiguity in (our) ways of experiencing it. The holy can appear as creative and as destructive."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of mystery and presence and hope, open our hearts to the ways You seek us, the ways You find us, the ways You employ us, the ways You bless us..."

May 9, 2010

Text: Colossians 2:1-19

"An Established Community"

Although Paul does not spell out the details, he is obviously concerned that the believers at Colossae have begun to fall for all kinds of false religious teachings (philosophy, empty deceit, human tradition, elemental spirits—v. 8).

My curious academic side wants to know more about these mis-steps in teaching, these errors of instruction. Evidently, Paul assumes the folks at Colossae will know what he is talking about.

But I do not need to know the specifics to understand that everything that sounds pious is not necessarily of the spirit of Christ.

What I hear in this is not a slam at non-Christian faiths so much as it is a caution against teachings that carry the name of Christian, but are not "according to Christ" (v. 8).

The importance of being "according to Christ" is underlined when Paul reveals that "the fullness of deity dwells bodily" in Christ (v. 9). Seldom does the biblical text make a clearer claim that Jesus Christ is God. This is strong stuff!

What are some of the claims made in the name of Christ that are actually foreign to the spirit of Christ?

How about avoiding someone who is an "outsider"? (On the contrary, think of how Jesus treated the lepers.)

How about the claim that if you believe in Jesus, you will become wealthy and worldly successful? (On the contrary, think of how Jesus' mother sang "he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty".)

How about the view that God blesses some with wealth? (On the contrary, think of how Jesus cautioned "how hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.")

Probably the greater threat to Christian practice is not from those who hold other religious convictions; the greater threat may well be from those who make false proclamation in the name of Jesus.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* (University of Illinois Press), Richard Hughes wrote: "Jesus counseled peace, but the empire practiced violence. Jesus counseled humility, but the empire engaged in a ruthless pursuit of power. Jesus counseled concern for the poor, but the empire practiced exaltation of the rich. Jesus counseled modesty, but the empire practiced extravagance. Jesus counseled simply living, but the empire encouraged luxurious living for those with the means to embrace that way of life. And while Jesus counseled forgiveness and love for one's enemies, the empire practiced vengeance."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord Jesus, forgive me for not taking You seriously. Forgive me for setting my own standards of success and meaning rather than living out of Your example and witness..."

May 16, 2010

Text: Colossians 3:12-17

"A Chosen Community"

Translation is a tricky business. When we read in English a text that

was originally in another language, we see the text through the eyes (and heart) of the translator. That is one reason to compare translations. Does one translator sense something missed by others?

In Colossians 3:12, the church at Colossae is called "chosen ones." Leastways, in the New Revised Standard Version, they are called "chosen ones." The New International Version is not very different: "chosen people."

In the King James Version, the Colossian Christians are simply called "the elect." J. B. Phillips (*The New Testament in Modern English*) paraphrases this way: "God's picked representatives." Richard Francis Weymouth puts it simply like this: "saints."

How about Clarence Jordan in *The Cotton Patch Version*? He translates it "people whom God has selected." The Contemporary English Version has "(God's) own special people." Letters to Street Christians puts the term as "pure and much loved children." James Strong, a Greek scholar from the nineteenth century, argues that the Greek word implies that someone is a favorite.

Well, you get the idea.

From each of these translations or paraphrases we gain various nuances of meaning. What they all seem to have in common is a view that it is God who calls the church into being.

It is God who shapes the mission of the people of faith. It is God whose grace and love precedes any response we make!

That means that the Church takes its signals from the One who has chosen, selected, called into being, formed, picked, loved, elected the Church.

Note in Colossians 3:13: we learn how to forgive from how Christ forgave. Note in Colossians 3:15: we are called to have peace as Christ gives peace. Note in Colossians 3:10: we are to learn from the word and wisdom of Christ. Note in Colossians 3:17: all we do is to be done in the name, the spirit, the purpose of Jesus Christ.

Being chosen by God is not to be chosen for glory or even success. It is to be chosen to be faithful.

May adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

What Someone Else Has Said:

Mitch Albom (*Have a Little Faith*, Hyperion) asked his childhood rabbi to tell why he thinks he became a rabbi. "Number one: I always liked people. Number two: I love gentleness. Number three: I have patience. Number four: I love teaching. Number five: I am determined in my faith. Number six: It connects me to my past. Number seven: (I can) fulfill the message of our tradition." Albom comments: "I did not hear God in there." The rabbi smiles. "God was there before number one."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God, touch Your chosen..."

May 23, 2010

Text: Philemon 1-25

"At Home in the Community"

A few months ago in our Sunday School class, the teacher asked: "Why is it easier to repent in private than it is to repent in public?"

As our class talked about it, we concluded that the central reason is that public repentance carries with it the added dimension of accountability.

If "everyone" knows that I repent of my gluttony, "everyone" is going to be watching what I eat at the next covered dish supper!

One class member suggested we might even foolishly think we can fool God more easily than we can fool our neighbors.

This week's study text, in a quiet way, raises a similar question. Usually, we think of this letter to Philemon as a personal letter, written by Paul to one particular man about one particular situation. Indeed it is that. But it is more than that.

In verse 3 ("grace to you"), the *you* is plural, not singular. Other folks are expected to read this letter! There is a list of others to whom Paul sends greetings: Philemon, of course, but also Apphia, Archippus, and "the church in your house." Other folks are included in this inside address!

The letter is said to come from Paul *and* Timothy. It is far more than a private, personal, one-on-one letter.

That means that Philemon will have other believers watching over his shoulder as he responds to Paul's plea about welcoming back Onesimus (evidently, a slave who has left—run away?—from Philemon).

Because Onesimus is mentioned in Colossians 4:9 as "one of you," there is a likelihood that Philemon lived in Colossae and had indeed received Onesimus back as a brother in Christ.

We are left to wonder: how influential were the watchful eyes of other believers in how Philemon handled the situation?

Perhaps the other members of the Colossian church challenged Philemon "to do the right thing."

Perhaps the other members of the Colossian church supported Philemon when he did the countercultural act of hospitality to a slave.

Perhaps the other members of the Colossian church had long, late-at-night discussions with Philemon about how to discern God's will in this unusual situation.

Thanks be to God that life in the Church is life in the plural!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In the epilogue to Garrison Keillor's novel *Pilgrims* (Viking), the author adds a poem that includes these lines: "Love can only be restored/ By practicing love. The daily labor/ Of love—offering it to the Lord/ And to yourself and to your neighbor."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "You have called us to life together, Loving God, so we seek to love together..."

May 30, 2010

Text: Jude 1-25

"At Risk in the Community"

Do you remember the name of the American woman who won the gold medal for freestyle moguls skiing at the Winter Olympics? Do you remember the name of the athlete whose death while practicing for luge competition put a cloud over the Olympics? Do you remember where Apolo Ohno placed in the short track race at the Olympics? For that matter, do you remember where the 2010 Winter Olympics were held?

It does not take long for things that we once thought were important to slip from view, to pass from memory.

That has happened in the early church. The letter of Jude (not to Jude, but *from* Jude) is a strong epistle, appealing for the faithful "to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

Evidently, the moral basics were being forgotten (v. 4, v. 8). Evidently,

the core faith was being diluted (v. 20). Evidently, division rather than unity had become the way of many congregations (v. 19).

Many scholars think the Letter of Jude was written in the early second century.

It had not taken long for central values to be lost, for ethical standards to be challenged. What had seemed so vital just a short while ago had become a matter of controversy and brokenness.

In the face of that "forgetfulness," Jude calls on the faithful to draw upon the central faith, to stay in touch with the Holy Spirit, and to look forward to gifts that God is yet to give (vv. 20-21).

Even though Jude is considerably upset by the false teachers, the writer of the letter pleads for mercy for those who are caught in the struggle (vv. 22-23). (What mercy do we show to those we think have abused the gospel?)

The closing verses of the letter are words often heard in benedictions. The affirmation is finally that God's

authority is "before all time and now and forever" (v. 25).

Bottom line: it never is a time to forget that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Oh, yes, speaking of forgetting: Hannah Kearney won the freestyle skiing; Nodar Kumaritashvili is the athlete who died in a training crash; Apolo Ohno won silver in the short track competition; the Winter Olympics were in Vancouver.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Christian Newcomer: His Life, Journal, and Achievements (S. Hough, editor, Board of Administration) contains this account: "June 1st, 1818—This day we held our Conference here; this was something new and strange to some of the Brethren, and they appeared to loathe to come under the rules of discipline; but they were soon convinced of their error....Conference closed...in peace and love."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Straighten us out, Lord!..."

Autumn Adventures 2010

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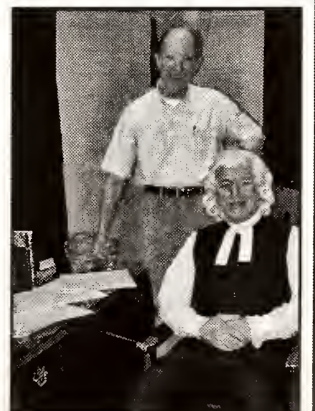
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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Clergy Spouses' Day Apart

A Spouses' Day Apart will be held on April 24 at the First UMC in Nashville, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Margaret Therkelsen, a well-known person of prayer and faith, speaker and author, will be the keynote speaker. The cost of \$20 will include lunch and snack breaks. Childcare will be provided. For information and a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/events/csdp/>.

Historical Society, Archives and History meeting in April

The spring meeting of the NC Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History which was scheduled for Saturday, April 10, has been changed to Saturday, April 17. The groups will meet at Pleasant Green UMC in Durham. Church historians and interested persons are invited to attend. Lunch will be served. Please contact Robin Harry, rharry@nccumc.org or 919-832-9560, ext. 252 to reserve a spot for lunch.

Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry coming April 10 in Raleigh

The 2nd Annual Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry will be on Saturday, April 10, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Avent Ferry United Methodist Church, Raleigh. This event is sponsored by the North Carolina Conference chapter of Methodist Federation For Social Action (MFSA.). Bishop Charlene Kammerer of Virginia will be the keynote speaker. The title of the conference is "Here I Stand, I Can Do No Other" taken from Martin Luther. The focus of the conference is on those who haven spoken prophetically and paid a price. The cost is \$25 and that does include breakfast and lunch and \$15 for students. For more information, contact Henry Jarrett at jarretth@bellsouth.net or call (919) 606-5674.

Upcoming lay speaker training events and contacts

- Lay speaker trainings have been scheduled in the NC Conference as follows:
- ♦ Rocky Mount District, 4/17, Basic Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472 to register.
 - ♦ Rocky Mount District, 5/1, Advanced Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472/236-5490 to register.
 - ♦ Burlington District, 5/21, Advanced Training, call Bonnie Francis - 336-449-9636 to register.

Treasurer training video available

Videos and presentation handouts from the Local Church Treasurer and Finance Committee training event offered recently are available at <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/treasurer-training-video-resource-available/>. The training event covered fraud survey findings and local church minimum internal control recommendations and also included a question and answer time and a discussion of stewardship best practices. With changes to the *Book of Discipline, 2008*, Finance Committees are now required to have written financial policies documenting the internal controls for the church. As part of the presentation handouts, a sample financial policy document is available as well as an in-depth publication on church audit requirements.

DISCIPLE study trainings scheduled

The Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, in partnership with The Duke Endowment, will offer two free trainings for NC Conference leaders of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP in September. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call 336-454-5348.

Mandatory sexual ethics training

All clergy under episcopal appointment are required to attend sexual ethics training in 2010. These mandatory trainings will be held across the Conference this fall. While they are scheduled around district clusters, any clergyperson may attend any training, but all clergy must attend at least one.

Retired clergy not serving in an appointed position are not required to attend but they are welcome.

Sign-in will be required. Each training will begin at 10 a.m. and last until 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

- Sept. 27: at St. Luke: Sanford (Burlington, Durham, Sanford Districts)
- Oct. 4: at Centenary: Smithfield (Goldsboro, Raleigh, Rocky Mount Districts)
- Oct. 21: at First: Laurinburg (Fayetteville, Rockingham, Wilmington Districts)
- Oct. 25: at St. James: Greenville (Elizabeth City, Greenville, New Bern Districts)
- Nov. 4: TBA in Raleigh (Make-up day at locations)

Facilitators from the Methodist Home for Children will lead the training. In order to help prepare materials, these leaders have asked for feedback from clergy. Please take a moment to answer a few questions in the survey found at the following link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QJ2VBK3>. Please complete the survey by April 25.

conference CALENDAR

April

- 2 Good Friday
- 4 Easter Sunday
- 6 - 7 Retreat for pastors in Cross-Racial Appointments, Camp Rockfish
- 8 - 10 Ebony Exploration Youth Event, Lake Junaluska
- 9 - 11 Kaleidoscope for Youth, Don Lee Retreat Center
- 10 Second Annual Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry, Avent Ferry UMC: Raleigh, 10am
- 14 - 15 Conference UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat, Centenary UMC: Smithfield
- 16 NCCUMM Executive Council Meeting, MERCI, Goldsboro
- 16 - 17 2010 North Carolina Conference United Methodist Men Work Projects, MERCI, Goldsboro
- 17 NCC Historical Society & Commission on Archives and History, Pleasant Green UMC: Durham
- 18 Native American Ministries Sunday
- 23 - 24 Deepening Your Effectiveness Discipleship Seminar for lay and clergy
- 24 Spouses Day Apart, 10am, Nashville UMC

- 25 Conference Youth Rally Day, NC Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC
- 28 Older Adult Ministries Committee Meeting, 10am, Methodist Building
- 30 - May 2 UMW National Assembly, St. Louis, MO

May

- 4 Communications Committee Meeting, 2 p.m., UM Building
- 6 National Day of Prayer
- 9 Methodist Retirement Homes Special Offering Mothers' Day/Festival of the Christian Home
- 11 - 13 Balancing Your Ministry, Renewing Your Life, retreat sponsored by the Academy for Leadership Excellence, Wrightsville Beach
- 14 2010 Clergy Session of the NC Annual Conference, 10 a.m., First UMC; Rocky Mount
- 14 - 15 Conference UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat. Centenary UMC: Smithfield
- 17 Conference Connectional Table Meeting, UM Building
- 20 - 28 Licensing School, NC Wesleyan, Rocky Mount
- 23 Pentecost Sunday
- 30 Peace With Justice Sunday

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Resolutions, reports due in May for conference

Resolutions for 2010 must be submitted to the Conference Secretary's Office no later than May 10. Reports from the committees, boards, and agencies are due no later than May 1.

The work of agencies, boards or committees will be recognized and affirmed only through the written report, as very few will have opportunities for presentations on the floor of this year's shortened conference.

Reports should be submitted electronically in MS Word format to smedlin@nccumc.org. Contact Shannon Medlin at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 222 if you have questions. The NC Conference will not publish a pre-conference resource. Following the Annual Conference, the reports will be published in the 2010 Journal.

Updates on 2010 NC Annual Conference

Details for the NC Annual Conference, June 10-13 in the Greenville Convention Center are being finalized. The conference is one day shorter than previous years, requiring schedule adjustments. Following is general information about the conference. Details and other information available at: <http://nccumc.org/secretary/>.

1. No conference materials will be printed and mailed to conference members. Agenda and other conference related information is available on the Internet at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/>. Check the site regularly for updates.
2. Pre-registration of conference members not required. Conference Secretary should be notified of any change in the person elected lay member of Annual Conference. (jlbyran@nccumc.org, smedlin@nccumc.org or 1-800-849-4433).
3. Clergy Executive Session will be held on May 14, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at First UMC, Rocky Mount. No Lay Executive Session.
4. An Annual Conference Briefing Session to present items of information and those needing conference action will be video

streamed at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 23. A live Q&A session will follow the presentation. Questions to be sent by e-mail. Districts will have at least one gathering point for lay and clergy to view the streaming. The presentation can be viewed from personal computers.

5. Conference opens Thursday, June 10, 10am with All Saint's Celebration and communion.
6. Special offerings, Thursday morning, evening and Friday evening. Churches and clergy have been asked to give separate financial pledges to Central Conference Pension Fund (long term effort of UMC to provide retirement security for 2,000 pastors, layworkers and surviving spouses in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe who are struggling to survive). Church pledge to be presented Thursday morning.
7. Awards (Evangelism, Key Taylor, Church & Society, etc.) 7 p.m. on Thursday.
8. Laity Event, Friday, 7:30 p.m. (Details to be announced later.)
9. Saturday, 10 a.m., Ordination Service and Fixing of Appointments.

Evans is featured speaker at UMM Rally

Johnny Evans, radio color commentator for NC State Football and Eastern NC head of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, will be the



keynote speaker for the NC Conference United Methodist Men Rally on Saturday, April 17 beginning at 10 a.m. at the MERCI Center outside Goldsboro. The Rally will conclude around 2 p.m.

The rally theme is "Empowering the Mighty Men of God."

Other speakers will be Bishop Al Gwinn, presenting his vision of partnership between MERCI and UMM; John Dowell, national UMM president; and L.W. Smith, Southeastern Jurisdiction UMM president.

For men wanting to learn more about and participate in mission projects during the weekend, work projects will be offered Friday evening at 6 p.m., before the 10 a.m. opening of the Rally on Saturday, and 2-4 p.m. Saturday. The MERCI Center has overnight accommodations available for a modest fee.

Men attending the rally are encouraged to support three ministries during the Saturday event: The Society of St. Andrews (SOSA), the Upper Room Prayer Center, and in the NC Conference, support of MERCI for response to disasters.

For 30 years, SOSA has been working to end hunger in the U.S. To support this ministry each attendee is asked to bring a 10 lb. bag of potatoes to the rally. In addition, each

church represented is asked to collect at least \$150 to feed 5,000 people.

To support the Upper Room Living Prayer Center, each

church represented at the rally is asked to send a prayer warrior to answer the Prayer Line to provide caring listeners, and offering prayers to and with hurting people. Churches are also asked to collect at least \$100 to support this ministry.

In support of MERCI, each man attending the rally is asked to bring either a bag of food or a health kit, sometimes called a medical kit and to bring at least \$100 to support the work of MERCI. Kit contents are available at <http://nccumc.org/missions> in the NCC Response Plan or contact a district mission secretary or the district office.

To register for the rally or for more information, visit: <http://ncumm.org>.

Scholarships support From page 11

applications are accepted through April 15.

In addition, annual conferences that participate in Student Day get 10 percent of their offering back for conference merit scholarships that they award to deserving United Methodist students. Current-Felder said the conferences will have less money for scholarships, too.

"We believe scholarships are a crucial investment in the future of The United Methodist Church – a concrete way to show young United Methodists that the church cares about their future. We really hope that individuals who can afford to do so will make an online contribution," Current-Felder said.

Scholarships are awarded through June for this fall, so dona-

tions would have to be made by June in order to help students this year, Current-Felder said. Donations made after that time would go toward 2011 scholarships.

Ten percent of the receipts go to the United Methodist Student Loan Fund, and the remainder is for scholarships. In addition to the rebate to participating annual conferences, a portion of Student Day receipts goes to United Methodist-related schools, colleges, and universities for scholarships awarded by the individual institutions.

Although Student Day is observed in November, donations can be made online at any time.

To make a donation, visit www.umciving.org/umstudentday and click on the red Donate Now button.

Church Mice™



Karl Zorowski



Patrick Tormey (left) and the Rev. Alan Swartz with the "Missio Dei" award. (Photo by Michelle Haller)

Horne Memorial in Clayton receives mission award

By Michelle Haller *

In a surprise ceremony at Horne Memorial UMC in Clayton, the Rev. Jon Strother, Raleigh District superintendent, presented the church with the "Missio Dei" missions award in recognition for the work they spearheaded in the church and community for disaster relief to Haiti. The presentation was made during the Feb. 28 worship service.

Strother acknowledged that the award was not so much to glorify the people of Horne, but rather to recognize what God has accomplished through them in their faithful service. He said Horne was the first church in the Raleigh District to receive the "Missio Dei" honor, symbolized by a spinning globe on an engraved base.

During the presentation, Strother said that in the 1950s a theologian named Karl Hartenstein connected the Latin words "Missio Dei" in a phrase, which literally translates as "the God of mission."

"Mission is the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus, 'the God of mission,'" Strother said. "The award is a symbol that the church has become partners in what God is doing."

Church member, Patrick Tormey, who has been instrumental in coordinating many of the logistics involved in getting money and donated goods into Haiti, was called upon to receive

the award on behalf of the church. Accompanying Tormey in receiving the award was the church pastor, the Rev. Alan Swartz.

To date, Horne has been instrumental in having over \$100,000 donated to the Haiti Relief Fund and the Ryan Epps Home for Children and more than 30,000 pounds of emergency and medical supplies being shipped from the Johnston County airport. Assisting them were the Clayton Rotary Club and Methodist Habitat of the Bahamas.

Nine tractor trailer loads (or 200,000 pounds) and three sea containers (or 90,000 pounds) of supplies have gone through the NC Conference's MERCI center in Goldsboro, where donations continue to be collected for ongoing relief.

Money and supplies are still being received at the church, located at 121 E. Second Street. For more information, call 919-553-6965.

* Michelle Haller is the volunteer communications coordinator at Horne Memorial UMC.

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Holding the check for Haiti relief are (L-R) Tony White, Red Springs town manager, the Rev. Vermel Taylor, pastor of Rhyne Memorial; John McNeill, mayor; and P. J. Smith, American Red Cross board member.

Rhyne Memorial — Walk-A-Thon for Haiti

On Feb. 20, members of Rhyne Memorial UMC in Red Springs, their pastor, the Rev. Vermel Taylor, Mayor John McNeill, Town Manager, Tony White, Apostle Anthony Buie, and approximately 50-60 citizens of Red Springs came together in a walk-a-thon for the earthquake victims of Haiti. The walk was 4.10 miles.

Taylor and the members of a small group from Rhyne Memorial, the Young Adult Coordinator Deidre Gales, and Communication Ministry members: Ida Majors and Chair Kelli Gales, came up with the idea of doing a walk-a-thon as a fundraiser for the victims of Haiti. As the discussion progressed, Rev. Taylor thought of inviting the town of Red Springs to join the church in the endeavor.

From that moment on, the church and community worked together to help the people of Haiti. The mayor and the town manager accompanied the church and represented the town in the project. The mayor felt a fellowship meal would help include the people who were unable to participate in the walk. Different vendors in the town donated food, use of the Community Building where the meal was served, their time, and personnel to ensure that everything went well. The police department escorted the walkers to ensure safety for all.

The church and community raised \$1,250 which went through the Red Springs American Red Cross agency to Haiti.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Anathoth Garden inspires Kentucky students.	2
Innovation in laity training in Greenville district.	3
Annual Conference 2010	7
June Bible Study	12
Support affirmed for Four Areas of Focus.	16

FC 28
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Newest NC Conference Connectional Ministries staff named

A new staffing ministry model aligned with current and developing local church needs is being implemented for Conference Connectional Ministries. The new model is similar to the Conference Connectional Table structure and is "focused on the local church with a high potential for transformational leadership development within local churches and communities," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

The new ministry model has team coordinators for Leadership, Christian Formation, and Outreach. The coordinators will form a core team, which also includes the Communications team coordinator, for collaborative ministries in response to needs of local churches.

In addition, a Media Center staff position has been reconfigured as a

three-quarter time position. The Outreach coordinator, Steve Taylor, was named in March. Following in this issue of the *NC Conference Christian Advocate*, there are announcements naming Dr. Christine Harman as coordinator of Christian Formation and Laura Dallas as media center associate. The Leadership coordinator has not yet been named.

The Stewardship coordinator position is being filled by NC Conference Treasurer Christine Dodson.

Christian Formation

The NC Conference staff position in Christian Formation and congregational renewal is being filled by Dr. Christine Harman.

Among the responsibilities of the role is transforming congregations into vital centers of mission and spiritual formation.

See "Newest NC Conference staff," page 5

NC Conference Connectional Ministries Model



NC Conference Bishop Al Gwinn, chair of the church's Ministry Study Commission, talks about the commission's big rocks at a meeting with the Committee on Faith and Order. The big rocks issues include guaranteed appointments, itinerancy, sacramental authority and steps into ordination. (Photo by Kathy L. Gilbert / UMNS.)

Bishop Gwinn leads group studying guaranteed clergy appointments

By Kathy L. Gilbert *

A United Methodist commission charged with developing ways to improve clergy effectiveness is considering recommending the elimination of guaranteed appointments.

In a joint meeting with the Committee on Faith and Order this week, members of the Ministry Study Commission raised concerns about the practice of promising some clergy lifetime jobs.

"We decided that the system of guaranteed appointments has created mediocrity, an expectation that clergy will have a job no matter how effective they are and that churches will get a pastor even if they are not functioning in a healthy way or participating in living missionally," said the Rev. Amy Gearhart, an elder in the Missouri Annual (regional) Conference and a commission member.

The ministry commission and the Committee on Faith and Order met and shared their work March 16 as both prepare reports for the 2012 General Conference, the top legislative body of the denomination.

The joint meeting was to share and get "push back" on some of the issues both groups are grappling with, said Bishop Al Gwinn, chair of the ministry study group and resident bishop of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

The Committee on Faith and Order was given leadership in reflecting on matters of faith, doctrinal teaching, order and discipline in the church.

The ministry commission has named the major issues they are working on "big rocks." The team is focusing on recruitment, discernment and formation for professional ministry; ordination and

sacramental authority; and clergy appointments.

"We want to concentrate on the big rocks in the jar and not get overloaded with the sand and small rocks," Gwinn said.

Deploying clergy

Historically, biblically and theologically, The United Methodist Church has practiced itinerancy, Gearhart said. Having bishops assign clergy to churches has been a tradition in United Methodism dating back to John Wesley.

However, clergy need to understand itinerancy is not something they do in exchange for a guaranteed appointment to a church, she said.

"We have heard pastors say, 'I will give you the practice of itinerating my family and my life and my household if you give me a guaranteed appointment.'" The two are not meant to be used against each other, Gearhart said.

"Itinerancy is effective and a response to covenantal obedience to a particular call from God," she said. "Itinerancy is not just about moving."

Book of Discipline

"The term 'guaranteed appointment' cannot be found in *The Book of Discipline*, our book of church law," Bishop Gwinn said in an interview in the NC Conference.

In ¶334.1 of the *Discipline*, in the section about Elders in Full Connection, is the statement that "...Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued..." A similar statement in ¶321 applies to Associate Members, provisional members and members in full connection.

See "Gwinn leads group," page 4

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Pastors trade churches on Sunday morning

By Mason Snyder *

Sunday mornings mean many people are off to church.

If you've lived in one place for a long time and you go to church, chances are you go to the same one regularly, but Sunday folks from one small North Carolina town tried something a little different.

At Trinity UMC, the word "structure" best describes a typical worship service.

People recite creeds and portions from the Bible collectively, and sing old hymns, but on this Sunday the church's pastor is nowhere to be found, and the congregation is excited about it.

"Myself and my family, we're just really thrilled with this," said one church member.

"We're just, well we're just excited," said an elder.

They call it a 'Pastor Swap'.

Trinity's pastor, the Rev. Harold Salmon is less than a mile down the road, preaching at Mill Branch Baptist Church, a predominately African American church.



The Rev. Harold Salmon

"We come together, not to change each other's style of worship, but to actually celebrate each other's style of worship," said Salmon.

And Mill Branches' Pastor and choir are at Caucasian-dominant Trinity. "Most people know that 11 o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated time in America," said Mill Branch pastor, the Rev. J. Gentile Everett.

"We work together. We socialize together. We even spend our money at the same places, but when it came to worship for most people,

they would all go in their separate ways," said Everett.

And that's what the two groups do.

Everett and his choir shake things up at Trinity, while Salmon gets a good response from the people at Mill Branch.

"Excitement, knowing that the same God that we worship is being worshipped everywhere," said Mill Branch member, Cynthia Dudley.

"I think we should do it more often," one Trinity member said.

"How can we really love God and separate ourselves from one another because of skin tone?" said Everett. "We're just trying to tear that down and say to the community, 'We love God and we love all of his creation'."

The churches' members believe a little change on a Sunday morning

will help do just that.

"Black, white, Indians, Mexicans - all of us are God's children," said Mill Branch member Vera Ford.

The small town in North Carolina has hopes of creating unity through their faiths. It's the second year the churches have done the pastor swap.

Salmon is retiring later this year, but says he hopes the church's next pastor makes the event a tradition. He will receive an extension ministry appointment, effective July 1, as the North Carolina Conference director of travel for Education Opportunities, Bishop Al Gwinn has announced.

** Mason Snyder is a writer for SCnow.com. Article was originally published on April 11, 2010.*

Anathoth Garden inspires college students

Students on Spring Break trip learn the importance of ethical eating

By Ava Jordan *

Though Campus Ministries provided several opportunities for group mission trips over Spring Break, one in particular seems to have made an

unexpected impact on the students who attended it, and they hope to use what they learned to make an impact here in Georgetown, KY as well.

The students went to Anathoth Community Garden at Cedar Grove UMC in North Carolina spent their time working in the community garden and discussing how food relates to faith and what people can do to improve the earth and their religious testimony at the same time.

Each member of the group took something different from the trip, but they all share a newfound passion for the connection between food and faith.

For sophomore Sarah Carey, "the most important part of the trip was learning about the connection regarding food and the Christian faith. By learning where our food comes from and what we can do to be more than



Sable Floyd and Alex Eaton are pictured turning over a crop at Chestnut Ridge Camp and Retreat Center in Efland.

just food consumers, Christians can be witnesses through what they eat. Though we had fun digging in the dirt, the fact that I can respect God and witness for Christ through my diet really put food into perspective for me."

Sophomore Clare White, on the other hand, had a career changing experience.

According to White, she has decided to go into sustainable agriculture because of the things she learned and experienced with the Anathoth Community Garden.

She was particularly affected by something Dr. Norman Wirzba, a former professor at Georgetown, said during their trip—"You can't profess to love the Creator and then trash creation." This, said White, is "exactly what we do with every bite" because of the unsustainable methods used by the corporate farms that produce most of America's food.

Junior Sable Floyd particularly enjoyed working in the garden. She said "The trip opened my eyes to the importance of eating ethically and buying food that is locally grown." She also said that she "would really

See "Garden inspires," pg. 4

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Innovation in laity training for the Greenville District

Greenville District Lay Leader Ed Mann cast his original vision for a new "Laity University" concept at the kickoff event at St. James UMC, Greenville, on Saturday, March 20.

Inspired by discussions over the last year within a group of pastors and lay members assembled in an Incubator Group taught by Greenville District Superintendent Beth Hood, this project is changing the training of laity.

"This will be something more than classes. It will teach how to become more involved in working for God's Kingdom, to be a better partner with your pastor, to better serve the church and to be the body of Christ more effectively," Mann said.

The kickoff for the Laity University included worship led by the Rev. Scott Wilkinson, director of the East Carolina University Wesley Foundation, and ECU area Wesley Singers and friends.

The Rev. Paul Dunham, pastor of Farmville UMC and member of the Conference Communications Committee, introduced the "Rethink Church" initiative from the General Conference.

District Superintendent Hood, in describing the new focus in training, said it came from the develop-

ment of a program called "Passion in Partnership," which she co-founded with Pastoral Coach, Peg Aldridge. They described this as "planning passionate partnerships between lay and clergy, between small churches and large churches, between rural churches and city churches...to model the unity to which Jesus calls us."

More than just a replacement for the January training event, Laity University will allow clergy and laity to live into new ways to be the church of Jesus Christ in the world.

Classes will be offered across the district on topics such as "Being a Trustee," "The SPRC," and "Church Finance." And beyond both Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking Ministries, as have been traditionally offered, there will now be a Youth Speaking Course. For some of the classes, preliminary training for each class will be in an online Internet environment, so that the face-to-face meetings will be the most productive.

The first offerings of Greenville District Laity University will be two sessions on May 15, where for a \$20 fee, one session will be "Passion in Partnership: Discovering the Strengths and Gifts God has given and how to better utilize them." The other session will be "Passionate



(L-R) The Rev. Kelli Sorg, Greenville District Lay Speaking instructor, and Greenville District Lay Leader Ed Mann during the district "Laity University."

Worship. The Why, How and What of creating and engaging in passionate worship."

Other opportunities for classes for the coming months include "Discover Spiritual Gifts," "Daily Discipline," "Leading Prayer," "Men's Ministry," "Coaching," "Evangelism," "Stewardship," Lay Pastoral Care, "Create Disciple-Making Communities," and "Opening Ourselves to Grace in the

Wesleyan traditions."

Other classes suggested by the laity will be considered.

For more details, and to register, contact District Lay Leader, Ed Mann, glvmann@hotmail.com or District Superintendent Hood, bethhood@nccumc.org.

The link to the video of Ed Mann's presentation is at: <http://www.ourchurchvideos.com/nccumc>.

UMCOR funds Help Haiti Rebuild

In their semi-annual meeting in April, UMCOR's board of directors approved \$10.4 million for the organization's Help Haiti Rebuild program and \$565,000 to support United Methodist Volunteers in Mission's coordination of US volunteers there.

UMCOR's disaster recovery efforts in Haiti would not be possible without the generosity of United Methodists and the many people of goodwill who have helped UMCOR raise more than \$19.8 million to date.

Gifts to support UMCOR's Haiti relief and recovery work can be made online by visiting www.umcorhaiti.org. One hundred percent of gifts made to this advance will help the people of Haiti.

Also at the board of directors meeting, the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey as the new head of UMCOR. Harvey, a pastor from Texas, succeeds Dr. Sam Dixon, who died after the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti. Harvey has a background in the local church, international health ministries, domestic disaster relief, and organizational management. She assumes her duties May 1.



Notice of Publishing Schedule Change

Notice: The July and August editions of the NC Conference Christian Advocate will be combined into one issue. This is being done because of the move of the United Methodist Building from Raleigh to Garner after Annual Conference. In September, monthly issues will continue.

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Gwinn leads group studying clergy jobs From page 1

A concern facing bishops during the appointment process is the availability of local church positions for clergy who should continue to be appointed and local pastors who can

be without a church to serve.

"The General Board of Pensions has told us that there are 717 more clergy than the church needs," Gwinn said.

"Some of our churches in North Carolina have been using 80-85% of their budget for clergy support. Eleven of our churches this year, and others in the past several years, have said they cannot afford a full-time clergy position."

He explained that this has resulted in several churches sharing a pastor or a reduction in the number of people on the church staff.

Some churches no longer have an associate pastor position.

Clergy appointments and what it means to be an effective pastor have been topics for discussion at several gatherings across the conference.

The emphasis of the NC Conference Cross-Racial Retreat, early in April, was covenant-making and accountability.

The retreat resource person was Dr. Gwendolyn Purushotham, pastor of Main Street UMC, in Nashua, NH. In her book "Watching Over One Another in Love: A Wesleyan Model of Ministry Assessment," she endorses covenants of mutual support and accountability between the pastor and church, church and pastor, and the district superintendent. (For more on the retreat, see page 8.)

Difficult path to ordination

The Rev. Jay Williams of the New York Annual (regional) Conference said the church's fear of not having enough young clergy and the assumption of guaranteed appointments also has resulted in a cumbersome and often lengthy process to entering ministry.

"The 2004 and 2008 General Conferences have done strong work in streamlining the process so we are already under way," he said.

"I personally have experienced that the process is extraordinarily difficult to navigate. Even with my extensive

and intimate knowledge, it is still too difficult."

There needs to be a paradigm shift to a "culture of call" during the candidacy stage, he added. "We need to deploy those who are called into ordination quickly."

Shared mission

"This has been a productive conversation," said Bishop David Yemba, chair of the Faith and Order Committee. "It is good to hear what is going on in the ministry study group. It's a starting point, but we still have some issues."

Gwinn agreed the task was large.

"I invite you to be honorary members of the ministry study commission," he said. "God is up to something with The United Methodist Church."



The Rev. Jay Williams said the steps into ordination are cumbersome and lengthy. Williams is part of the Ministry Study Commission. The commission met with the Committee on Faith and Order March 16 to share and discuss their work. (Photo by Kathy L. Gilbert / UMNS).

If the church is to catch a new vision, it will take broad ownership."

* Kathy Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

Garden inspires students

From page 2

like to see the Caf[eteria] begin to use more organically grown food, especially food from local farmers."

Bryan Langlands is now "striving to eliminate meat that has been factory-farmed" from his diet.

He intends to buy more of his meat and vegetables from a pair of Scott County farms with Community Supported Agriculture programs.

These farms use organic and biodynamic farming methods, which are better for the environment than conventional, chemical-based farming. Langlands also plans to begin gardening and composting in his backyard.

White also pointed out many things that these students are hoping to get started in Georgetown in order to make a difference around campus.

Next semester, Georgetown will be kicking off the Real Food Challenge, which is a national movement to get sustainable food into college cafeterias. Students interested in this will join and help out with the challenge this fall.

Georgetown already has a community garden of its own, headed by Dr. Homer White. Campus organizations and departments have been given the opportunity to secure a plot in this garden.

* Ava Jordan is copy editor for the *Georgetownian*, the college newspaper of Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY. Article reprinted from the *Georgetownian* with permission.

New NC Wesleyan scholarships reward academic achievement

By Susan Best *

High grades will be worth hundreds, even thousands of dollars, to students at North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount beginning next fall when the school launches an innovative scholarship program.

"Our goal is to provide a framework for recognizing the excellent academic performance of students who return to Wesleyan for their sophomore, junior and senior years," said Wesleyan President James A. Gray III. "What we'll be doing is recognizing students who come to Wesleyan, do very well and continue to do well. Our objective is to give reasons for the better students to stay and graduate."

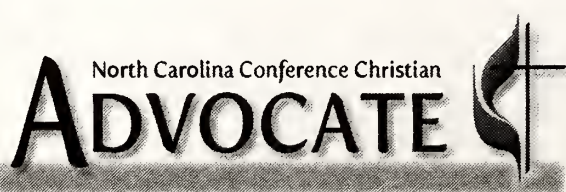
Students can qualify for the new scholarships primarily on the basis of their grade point averages (GPAs).

Students with a GPA of 3.25 on a scale of 1-4 may qualify for the President's List Achievement Scholarship of \$250 per year. An even higher recognition, the President's Honors List Achievement Scholarship, carries a \$500 award and requires a 3.75 GPA.

Students must attend classes on Wesleyan's Rocky Mount campus full-time in order to qualify. Although students in the college's Adult Degree Program on the Rocky Mount campus and in Goldsboro and the Triangle are not eligible for the achievement scholarships, they may qualify for other types of financial assistance.

Gary L. Sherman, Wesleyan's vice president of enrollment, said that while some other colleges do offer incentive scholarship programs,

See "NC Wesleyan," page 5



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

Newest NC Conference Connectional Ministries staff named From page 1



Dr. Christine Harman

"Harman comes with extraordinary gifts and experience to join the Conference Connectional Ministries team as coordinator of Christian Formation," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, conference executive director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization in announcing the staff addition.

A lay member of the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Dr. Harman is the former associate director of Discipleship Development for that conference. In that role, she provided coaching for clergy and congregations for improvement in disciple-making strategies.

She also provided leadership training for clergy and laity, focusing on team development, conflict management and leading change.

As discipleship development director, Harman co-lead training for pastor-lay teams for revitalization of local congregations.

"The role in the NC Conference staff will be similar to the work Harman did in Kentucky. Coaching and development of discipleship and spiritual formation opportunities in the church are significant aspects of the job," Goehring said.

In addition, Harman will relate to the Christian Formation team of the Connectional Table (the vision, assessment and decision-making leadership core for the Conference) and the boards and committees that make up the ministry area, including Evangelism, Congregational Development, Church and Society, Education (Children, Youth, Young Adults, Older Adults, Camp and retreat ministries, Higher Education and Campus ministry, and Archives and History), Spiritual Life and Worship.

Prior to her years on the Kentucky Conference staff, Harman had an 18-year career in banking.

She worked as an employee trainer and as a consultant in quality-improvement in the industry.

Harman is a member of the denomination's General Board of Discipleship.

In Kentucky, she served as Conference Lay Leader from 1989-1996 and represented the Conference as a lay delegate to General Conference in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008.

She has been an active member of local congregations and UMW throughout her adult life.

In 2008, Harman completed a Doctor of Education with a focus on Human Resource Development at Vanderbilt University.

In addition, she holds a Masters in Education from Vanderbilt and a bachelor's degree from the University of Evansville in Indiana.

Harman will relocate to Raleigh and begin her work July 1.

Media Center

Laura Dallas of Carrboro, a public library branch manager, has been selected as the media center associate in Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization. She will begin her work for the NC Conference in early May.

"Laura Dallas brings an advanced degree, experience in library management, and a passion for equipping local churches that we are excited to welcome to the team," said the Rev. Taylor Mills, chair of the Conference Communications Committee and a member of the interview task force to select the media center associate.

"With the prominence of the media center in the new United Methodist Building being constructed in Garner and Laura Dallas' savvy use of new technologies to bring resources to communities, we know that the churches and pastors of the North Carolina Annual Conference will find the media center to be relevant to their ministries in many new ways," Taylor said speaking for the interview task force.

The new media center associate will be heavily engaged in moving the media center collection to the new building after Annual Conference in June.

New initiatives, such as online video, social networking and online review of curriculum, will be developed after the move.

In January, the Connectional Ministry staff was reorganized.

Prior to that time, the work of the full-time media center director was coupled with the ministries of Older Adult, Education, and Archives and History.

The new position, designated as three-quarter time, is focused on the media center.

Older Adult, Education, and Archives and History ministries will be the purview of the Christian Formation coordinator.

"Once the new media center position was announced, applications began pouring in," Taylor said.

An outside consultant was engaged by the Connectional Ministry office to help sort through the initial contacts to determine if criteria were met by the applicants.

The Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization, then assembled an interview team from the Conference.

"After thoughtful and prayerful work by this team, Dallas was

chosen," she said.

Dallas has most recently been the branch manager of the Carrboro Cybrary, a community-focused public library. While there, she led book clubs, initiated partnerships with six community organizations, and led programs to reach out to populations who have historically under utilized the library.

In 2006, Dallas earned her Master of Library Science degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received the Dean's Award for her Master's Paper.

She had previously earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from North Carolina State University in 2003.

Since she was very young, Dallas has been a member of various United Methodist churches.

Her grandfather, the Rev. Richard T. Commander, was once pastor of Carrboro UMC where Dallas is involved in a Bible study.

"I am looking forward to everyone meeting Laura Dallas. She told us that, more than anything, she feels called to put Christian resources in the hands of people and churches," Goehring said.



Laura Dallas

NC Wesleyan scholarships From page 4

they generally don't provide systematic ways for students to increase their scholarship funds. "Wesleyan's achievement scholarships will be awarded at the end of an academic year, based on the student's GPA. The scholarships apply toward tuition for the following academic year," Sherman explained.

"A freshman who earns a 3.25 GPA and is placed on the President's List will receive \$250 toward tuition for the next year. If the student maintains his high GPA during his second year, not only can he keep his \$250 scholarship but he will qualify for an additional scholarship amount. So the award potentially can build to a total of \$1,500 for a 3.25 GPA by the student's senior year. The higher the student's cumulative GPA and the

longer the student maintains it, the greater the award."

Likewise, Wesleyan offers a larger scholarship award for students with a 3.75 GPA who are placed on the President's Honors List. That award begins at \$500 and can build to a total value of \$3,000 by the student's senior year.

In addition to achievement scholarships, students also may qualify for other types of scholarships and other forms of financial assistance.

"Wesleyan's goal is that good students will stay and graduate," Sherman said. "These new achievement scholarships will help the college and the students reach that goal."

** Susan Best is director of communications at NC Wesleyan College.*

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News from Lake Junaluska

Lake Junaluska's director announces retirement

Since June 2000, Dr. Jimmy L. Carr has served as the executive director of Lake Junaluska. Carr recently announced his retirement, effective at the close of 2010.

"I will soon be in the 11th year as Executive Director here at Lake Junaluska, and I feel that I have given the leadership I needed to give," Carr said. "These years have been challenging and rewarding. Joy, my wife, and I have enjoyed our opportunities for ministry at this very special place. We both feel now is the time to begin to enjoy a new chapter in our lives."

During his time as executive director, Carr has successfully spearheaded several major campaigns, including a fundraising campaign that collected \$11 million dollars for improvements at Lake Junaluska, the establishment of a workplace discipleship program, and renovations of several lodging and meeting facilities around campus.

Upon retirement, Jimmy and Joy Carr will divide their retirement between Lake Junaluska and Brandon, MS. Carr and his wife plan to enjoy spending more time with their children and grandchildren upon retirement.

"I believe that the best days for Lake Junaluska are ahead. We have dealt with many transitional issues and have implemented many good ministry and business practices that will carry us into the future," said Carr.

Bishop Larry Goodpaster, the President of the Lake Junaluska Board, and the executive committee are in the process of searching for and individual to fill the position.

"We will move forward," said Bishop Goodpaster. "Transitions are never easy, but being at a strong place like we are now will make it easier.... We hope that by January 2011, we will have a new Executive Director."

Carr is an ordained deacon in The

United Methodist Church. A native of Forest, MS, he was educated at Forest schools, the University of Southern Mississippi and Scarritt College, Nashville, TN where he was awarded the Masters of Arts degree in Christian Education.

He has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of Rust College since 1995 and chairs the Student Affairs Committee. He also serves as a member of the executive committee. Rust College, located in Holly Springs, MS, is one of 13 historic African-American United Methodist colleges in the U.S.

Prior to his appointment to the Southeastern Jurisdiction position, Carr served as associate general secretary, section of Deacon and Diaconal Ministries with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

He was instrumental in the development of the Order of Deacon having participated in the study of ministry for two quadrennia on behalf of the general church prior to serving in that appointment.

From 1986-1988, Carr also served on the committee that began the process for establishing Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe.

Carr served appointments in Pascagoula, Meridian and Jackson as



Jimmy L. Carr

a member of the Mississippi Conference. His commitment to The Church has led him to serve in many conference and district positions throughout his career.

In addition he has been active in the life of the communities in which he lived. He served as a governor appointee on the board of Supervisors of Rankin County, MS and as chair of the Rankin County Democratic Executive Committee.

Throughout 2010, Lake Junaluska will be celebrating Carr's accomplishments and retirement. For more information, please visit www.lake-junaluska.com/jimmy-carr.

Discover the jazz of preaching at Junaluska's 2010 Ministry Summit

Want to preach with great freedom and joy? Discover The Jazz of Preaching at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center's annual Ministry Summit, August 1-4, 2010.

Drawing on the rich treasures of jazz, Lake Junaluska's 2010 Ministry Summit will call preachers to unleash their creative enterprise by risking improvisation, playing with dialogue, and becoming open to mystery and grace in preaching.

The event is dedicated to honesty and reaching beyond in order for pastors and their congregations to embrace God, and will be based mostly on the subject of preaching. It will also encompass learning about fresh joy and new freedom in living.

"This ministry summit will allow preachers to grow in their ministry by teaching them to connect with their congregations in new ways," said Jimmy L. Carr, Executive Director. "The Lake Junaluska Ministry team has designed The Jazz of Preaching Ministry Summit with the goal of opening preachers' hearts and minds to new techniques and venues of reaching their congregations. We hope all will join us for an invigorating summit this year."

Featured preachers at The Jazz of Preaching Ministry Summit include Dr. Kirk Byron Jones, Dr. Tom Long, and Heather Murray Elkins. Wor-

ship, music and arts for the event will include the Junaluska Singers, a sampler of jazz musicians and ensembles from across the Southeast, Miriam's Daughters Dance Troupe, and a resident visual artist.

Dr. Kirk Byron Jones is the author of *The Jazz of Preaching: How to Preach with Great Freedom and Joy*. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Drew University, and is currently a professor of ethics and preaching at Andover Newton Theological School. In addition, he teaches and preaches at churches, schools and conferences throughout the country.

Dr. Tom Long, the Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology at Emory University is another featured preacher. In 1996, Dr. Long was named one of the twelve most effective preachers in the English-speaking world by Baylor University, along with Fred Craddock, Billy Graham and others. He was ordained in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and is currently a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

In addition, Heather Murray Elkins will preach. Elkins is a professor of worship, preaching and the arts at Drew Theological School, where her primary work in curriculum involves courses on worship, the Center for

Emerging patterns for worship conference coming May 24-27

Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, in partnership with the Alban Institute, presents *Emerging Patterns for Worship* in the 21st Century, May 24-27, 2010.

This four-day conference will feature opportunities to explore contemporary movements and patterns of spirituality that are emerging in Protestant worship, and participants will enter into holy conversation with worship leaders and ministry colleagues to gain deeper insight into developing culturally relevant worship.

"We are excited to join with The Alban Institute in offering this worship and learning experience," said Jimmy L. Carr, Executive Director of Lake Junaluska. "This is a signature partnership event, and we hope that all who participate will be spiritually enriched."

Participants will explore new patterns of worship with two well-known speakers and experienced worship leaders. Author, speaker and independent scholar Diana Butler

Bass will be one featured conference speaker. Bass has written seven books on the subjects of Christianity and worship, including her best-selling "Christianity for the Rest of Us," which was named one of 2006's best religion books of the year by Publisher's Weekly. It also won the Book of the Year Award from the Academy of Parish Clergy. A regular contributor to USA Today, Newsweek, Time, CNN, FOX, PBS, and NPR on the subjects of religion, politics and culture, Bass is not only well-known but well-respected as a leading figure in the Christian spectrum. She also directed a study of mainline Protestant vitality from 2002-2006, funded by the Lilly Endowment, and has taught at several different universities and seminaries.

The conference will also feature Daniel T. Benedict, who served as Worship Resources Director for The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church from

See "The jazz of preaching," page 10

See "Emerging patterns," page 8

a Future
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Living for Jesus

North Carolina Annual Conference 2010

Annual Conference briefing session offered by Internet video conference

District sites selected to host video conference in each district

Annual Conference Briefing Sessions by video streaming will be held in each district, beginning at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 23. The district sessions are available to any conference member. The access link on the Internet will be available on the conference website, nccumc.org, at least several days before the date.

Issues to be presented will include items that require voting at the conference. A video streaming test pattern will begin at 2:45 p.m. and the session begins at 3 p.m.

Following the presentation, about

30 minutes of live questions and answers will be held. Answers will be provided for questions that members submit by e-mail (helpdesk@nccumc.org) or through some other process to be announced on the website.

Individual members can watch the briefing on their home computer and can submit questions.

Any late minute changes to the streaming will be noted on the conference website.

Check district websites for any changes in district locations.

Links to all district sites are available at <http://nccumc.org/districts/>.

Following by district are locations which are hosting the video conference for those who choose not to watch from their home:

Burlington: Davis Street UMC, 606 East Davis Street, Burlington

Durham: Creedmoor UMC, 214 Park Avenue, Creedmoor

Elizabeth City: First UMC, 201 South Road Street, Elizabeth City

Fayetteville: Salem UMC 2165 Middle Rd; Fayetteville

Goldsboro: Pine Forest UMC, 867 NC Highway 581 S, Goldsboro

Greenville: Sharon UMC, 4106 Sharon Church Rd, Kinston

New Bern: Ann Street UMC, 417 Ann Street, Beaufort

Raleigh: The United Methodist Building, 1307 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh

Rockingham: First UMC, 410 E. Washington St., Rockingham

Rocky Mount (four locations):

Jackson UMC, 206 Thomas Bragg Dr., Jackson

Bailey UMC, corner of Green Street and Deans Street, Bailey

St. Paul UMC, 1217 Bethlehem Road, Rocky Mount

Weaver's Chapel UMC, 2209 Weaver's Chapel Rd., Littleton

Sanford: Southern Pines UMC, 175 Midland Rd., Southern Pines

Wilmington (three locations):

Wesley Memorial UMC, 1401 S. College Rd., Wilmington

Seaside UMC, 1300 Seaside Rd., Sunset Beach

Trinity UMC, 901 W. Broad St., Elizabethtown

For more information:

The conference agenda and other information related to the Annual Conference are available by visiting <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference> or from district offices.

Nationally recognized philosopher to be AC laity event speaker

Tom Morris, a nationally recognized philosopher who is a local church member in the North Carolina Conference, will be the speaker at the 7:30 p.m. speaker at the Laity Celebration on June 11 during Annual Conference.

Morris will talk about "True Success in Times of Change" and how this relates to the local church ministries. He is a long-time member of Wrightsville UMC in Wrightsville Beach.

He is described as being "one of the most active philosophers in the world because of his unusual ability to bring the greatest wisdom of the past into the challenges of the present," in his biographical information.

Morris, a distinguished Alumnus of the Durham Academy, was a Morehead Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill and holds a Ph.D. in both Philosophy and Religious Studies from Yale University. For 15 years, he was professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Currently, he is chairman of the Morris Institute for Human Values.

His 12th book, "True Success: A New Philosophy of Excellence," launched him into a new adventure as a public philosopher and advisor



Tom Morris

See "Laity event speaker," page 10

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Three superintendents discussed appointment-making during the Cross-Racial Retreat. From left to right are the Rev. Herbert Lowry, discussion moderator; the Rev. Gray Southern, Durham district; Dr. Sam Wynn, Fayetteville District; and the Rev. Leonard Fairley, Rockingham district.

Covenant-making, accountability emphasized at cross-racial retreat

The annual retreat for pastors in Cross-Racial appointments was held at Camp Rockfish, April 6-7. Twenty pastors from across the North Carolina Conference gathered under the banner: "Rethink Church to become the Kingdom of God—The Challenges and Opportunities to Embody the Gospel."

Dr. Gwendolyn Purushotham, pastor of Main Street UMC, in Nashua, NH, a former district superintendent and member of the staff of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, served as the resource person.

The emphases of the retreat were covenant-making and accountability. Dr. Purushotham, author of the book "Watching Over One Another

in Love: A Wesleyan Model of Ministry Assessment," offered a paradigm for ministry assessment grounded in covenant of mutual support and accountability, based on the Wesleyan themes of grace and responsibility.

Dr. Sam Wynn, district superintendent of the Fayetteville District, was the preacher for the opening worship service.

Three district superintendents, Wynn, the Rev. Leonard Fairley, and the Rev. Gray Southern, led the group in a discussion on taking a deep dive in covenant relationships.

The district superintendents shared from their experiences in

See "Cross-racial," page 11

Emerging patterns for worship

Continued from page 6

1993–2005, and now directs Strong Center Open Doors, a worship website and consulting ministry. Benedict has written and co-authored several books, his most recent entitled "Patterned by Grace: How the Liturgy Shapes Us."

He has also served on the Baptism and Holy Communion study committees, and received certification in digital culture ministry from Perkins School of Theology. Benedict teaches online courses through Southwestern College's Institute for Discipleship, and is passionate about integrating liturgy and contemplative spirituality, and teaching and resourcing worship leaders.

Susan Leonard Ray, senior pastor of Advent United Methodist Church in Simpsonville, SC, will lead worship. Ray has served since 2005 as the principal designer of worship

services for the South Carolina Annual Conference, and is known for her integration of culturally-relevant worship practices with ancient, faithful practices, while still retaining qualities of the community environment. She best describes these practices not as "new" worship, but as "renewed" worship.

More information about the speakers, registration and cost, lodging, and directions can be found at www.lakejunaluska.com/worship-patterns or by calling Pam Naplen at 828-454-6656.

Apply now for rural church grants up to \$5,000 for building projects

Applications are available for rural churches to apply for a 2010 grant of up to \$5,000 from the Renfro Trust Fund. Applications to be considered for 2010 grants must be completed with all required signatures and received by Lake Junaluska Office of Development and the Foundation no later than Sept. 1.

The Renfro Trust Fund provides grants to be used for establishing and supporting United

Methodist churches in rural areas within the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The term "rural areas" is interpreted as mean towns of 10,000 or less, villages, and open country.

Grants can be awarded to situations described as unusual and challenging for which insufficient funds are available from local sources. Grants are for

See "Rural church grants," page 9

Minimum internal financial control guidelines defined

Anyone serving as a financial officer or in a financially-related position within a local church is required to serve with fiduciary responsibility over the financial matters of the church.

This fiduciary responsibility means that anyone working in service with local church finances is to perform his or her duties with the trust and confidence that they are acting for the benefit of the church and not for the benefit or convenience of themselves.

Serving in the area of financial responsibility calls for guidance in providing the most effective and most efficient ways to safeguard the assets if the church.

One of the ways to safeguard the assets is to put procedures in place that have been proven to minimize risks by preventing and detecting error, deterring fraud and protecting innocent staff and volunteers.

Guidelines have been developed to assist those with financial responsibilities in local churches to identify and implement basic

internal control procedures.

These guidelines are intended to aid in the prevention or deterrence of fraudulent behavior and are not accusation that fraudulent activities are being performed.

These guidelines provide protection for those in a position of controlling financial activity from being accused of fraud. Part of the fulfillment of the calling to be good stewards of the Lord's funds is having effective procedures in place to safeguard those funds.

These minimum standards should be increased for churches with higher volumes of transactions but should not be compromised for lower volumes of transactions.

The guidelines are available on the Downloads page of the Treasurer's Office website (<http://nccumc.org/treasurer/files/LC-Minimum-Controls.pdf>).

If questions arise on implementing these minimum standards, please contact the appropriate district superintendent or the Conference Treasurer's Office at (800) 849-4433.

Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

Beaufort County Community College donates funds to UMCOR for Haiti relief

The Student Government Association at Beaufort County Community College, along with other campus-based organizations, recently culminated a fund drive for Haitian earthquake relief by raising \$2,000 for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Michael Cobb, president of the BCCC Student Government Association, recently presented a \$2,000 check to the Rev. Sam Loy, NC Conference missions chair.

BCCC raised the money through sales of ribbons and community donations for UMCOR in memory of Dr. Sam Dixon of Roanoke Rapids, an NC Conference elder and head of UMCOR.

Dixon had traveled to Haiti for a meeting and died from injuries sustained in the quake.

Sue Brookshire, director of Retention Services at BCCC and a member of First UMC-Washington suggested UMCOR as the campaign recipient because 100 percent of gifts given to UMCOR go to the directed recipient need. Brookshire made the first donation to the campaign.

Cobb said he is proud of the efforts of the BCCC community to come together to raise the funds.

"We wanted to help Haiti," he said. "And we chose UMCOR because we wanted to make sure the money got to Haiti and was not used for other relief needs."

"I'm proud of this effort because it shows that we, as a college community, can work together to accomplish a goal," he said.

UMCOR is the not-for-profit global humanitarian aid organization of the United Methodist Church. UMCOR is working in more than 80 countries worldwide, including the United States. Its mission is to alleviate human suffering—whether caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people.

Partnering with other organizations, UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters that are interruptions of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own.

The money, along with \$15 million raised by United Methodists for Haitian earthquake relief, will be used for recovery and rehabilitation efforts such as transitional housing, water purification and medical supplies, Loy said. A long-term recovery plan has been developed.



At Morris Chapel UMC, B. J. Johnston of Jackson, Miss., presented "The Man From Aldersgate" by playwright, Brad L. Smith. The play is based upon the journals of John Wesley (1703-1791).

Morris Chapel UMC marks 150th anniversary with celebrations

The doors at Morris Chapel UMC have been opening for 150 years at the little white chapel that sits at the northwest corner of Harnett County on land donated by John A. Morris, a local layperson, and his wife, Candis.

The first church was built in 1860 when Abraham Lincoln was U.S. President. The building was replaced in 1904 and is still in use today. In 1959, J. Marvin Groce, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Morris, along with his wife, Beulah Rosser Groce, donated land adjoining the church property on which the parsonage was built which is still used today to house the pastor and his family. A fellowship hall was constructed alongside the sanctuary in 1968.

Since that time, many changes have taken place at the chapel. Seventh-generation families still gather for worship each Sunday along with families new to the area.

The church's Heritage Committee designated four Special Sundays to be observed this year to celebrate its rich history. John Wesley Sunday was held on March 21, honoring the founder of Methodism.

To begin the service, the congregation waited outside the front doors of the sanctuary when John Wesley, played by B. J. Johnston of Jackson, Miss., approached on horseback, Bible in hand, asking Pastor J. H. Daniels if the service had begun.

Accepting the Rev. Daniels' invitation to join the service, Johnston entered the sanctuary and presented *The Man From Aldersgate* by playwright, Brad L. Smith. The play is based upon the journals of John Wesley (1703-1791).

Congregants found the service informative, inspirational and heartwarming as Johnston brought the teachings of Wesley to life. At times it was also humorous with music and

interaction with the congregation.

The horse used to transport John Wesley to the church was owned by the late Delbert McLeod, a fifth generation descendant of John and Candis Morris. His wife Ann noted that McLeod likely smiled as he looked down upon the celebration.

The second special Sunday to be observed this year to commemorate the church's anniversary will be June 6 when young and old gather from near and far to celebrate Homecoming. The Rev. Tracy Manness, pastor of the church from 1959 to 1963, will deliver the message.

After the worship service and traditional covered-dish meal, the congregation will honor the memory of the one for whom it is named by journeying to the family cemetery nearby and placing a wreath upon Morris's grave.

An old-fashioned hymn sing and ice cream social will highlight the third special Sunday on July 25 and the United Methodist Youth Fellowship will bury a time capsule.

The final special Heritage Sunday to be celebrated this year will be Sept. 19, when the church gathers to celebrate the date that the cornerstone was laid for the present sanctuary.

The late J. Marvin Groce was present and laid the stone on September 15, 1904. NC Conference Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. will deliver the message. The congregation will also remember the many family members who have gone to their great reward, those dear ones who laid the ground work, keeping the doors open for 150 years and leaving behind a wonderful legacy of faith.

For more information about *The Man From Aldersgate* play, contact B. J. Johnston via email at bj@kareproductions.com or visit his website at www.kareproductions.com.



Front Row L-R: Sue Brookshire, director of Retention Services at Beaufort County Community College; Morgan Roberson, president of the BCCC Chapter of Gamma Beta Phi honor society; the Rev. Danny Allen, pastor of First UMC in Washington; the Rev. Sam Loy, NC Conference Missions Committee chair; Michael Cobb, president of the BCCC Student Government Association, and Shellie Ingalls, president of the BCCC Medical Laboratory Technology Club; Back row: Theresa Edwards, coordinator BCCC Student Activities; Lauren Davis, SGA historian; Lori Diaz, SGA treasurer; Chris Jones, SGA vice president; Monica Cobb, vice president, BCCC Ladies of Onyx Club, and Tasharia Keyes, president BCCC B3 Science Club.

Rural church grants Continued from page 8

church building projects only and are not for parsonages.

Guidelines and the application form are available on the Lake Junaluska web site at www.sejumc.org/renfro-trust/.

If there are questions or concerns,

send an e-mail to ralegria@lakejunaluska.com. To speak with someone about the grants, call 1-828-454-6712 and ask for Aly Groesser, Office of Development and Foundation at Lake Junaluska or Raúl B. Alegría, interim director of the foundation.



Wesley Pines Executive Director Wade Rozier, UMRH Board of Trustees Chairman Mack Parker, Wesley Pines Chaplain Anne Giles Benson, Mayor of Lumberton Ray Pennington, Greenbrier Development official David Bahr, Chestnut Street UMC Pastor Steve Little, Wesley Pines Residents Association President Meta Wood, Weitz Construction Site Manager Brian Baas, LCS Regional Manager Brett Logan, UMRH Corporate Executive Director Jonathan Erickson break ground for the new Wesley Pines on March 30th.

Wesley Pines breaks ground for new continuing care community

Wesley Pines Retirement Community in Lumberton broke ground for their new community on Tuesday, March 30. Wesley Pines, a community of The United Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc. is Robeson County's only continuing care retirement community.

Board of Trustee's Chairman, Mr. Mack B. Parker, gave the keynote address saying: "Our board recognizes and appreciates the confidence and trust that our Wesley Pines residents have placed in us to meet their needs for a new building. This is your home and we know that we have an obligation to ensure that your golden years are filled with some of the most wonderful experiences that you will ever encounter. This includes having your daily needs met in a safe and secure environment...."



We want to thank you for choosing to live at Wesley Pines, and for choosing a community related by faith to The United Methodist Church."

Executive Director, Wade Rozier, said, "The event culminated two years of research, planning and design work by The United Methodist Retirement Homes Board of Trustees. This initial Phase 1 is part of a long-range campus development plan that will offer area seniors unparalleled retirement living and luxurious skilled nursing

care. This first phase of development consists of replacing the existing 49,000 square feet assisted living and nursing building with a spacious and beautiful new 75,500 square foot center."

Meta Wood spoke on behalf of the Wesley Pines Residents Association and expressed excitement and appreciation on behalf of the residents for the Board of Trustees new commitment to Wesley Pines.

The Rev. Ann Giles Benson, Wesley Pines' chaplain, gave the invocation. The Rev. Steve Little, pastor of Chestnut Street UMC, gave benediction.

A crowd of over 200 people attended the event and reception that followed. Greenbrier Development of De Moines, Iowa is overseeing the project, SFCS of Charlotte is the architectural firm and Spellman Brady is the design firm. BB&T is the financial partner.

When Phase I is completed, residents will be moved and the current building will be taken down. As part of Phase I, a new fellowship center is planned. The existing cottages, villas and duplexes will remain and new cottages will be added as needed.

Wesley Pines, a non-profit senior living community, is related by faith to the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Wesley Chapel UMC improves facility

Through a grant from The Duke Endowment, Wesley Chapel UMC recently completed a project to add a rest room and handicap ramp to their facility, which was built in 1831 and had never included a rest room. The church is located in the Alligator Community in Columbia. The project was challenged by rain and the severity of the winter months as well as modifications to the plans due to code requirements. Church members hope that these additions will allow more people to worship at Wesley Chapel.



The new ramp at Wesley Chapel UMC.

Laity event speaker named

From page 7

to the corporate world. He has been on broadcast and cable networks and featured in national newspapers discussing philosophy. Morris audiences have included companies such as Coca Cola, NBC Sports, and Target Stores. In addition, he leads Morris Institute Wisdom Retreats and serves as an advisor to corporations.

At Wrightsville UMC, he enjoys Bible Study opportunities, chances to discuss philosophy and classic theology, and occasionally playing a little guitar at informal church events. Recently, a Sunday school class served as the "focus group" for his next book.

The jazz of preaching

From page 6

Ministry and Imagination, and cross-cultural courses on Appalachian studies. She is an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church and helped initiate the faculty exchange program at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, Korea. Elkins is also the author of "Holy Stuff of Life" (2006).

More information about the event, speakers and registration can be found at www.lakejunaluska.com/summit. Register by May 30 to take advantage of early registration of \$160 per person. After May 30, the cost is \$175 per person.

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An Alternative Way To Travel With Someone You Can Trust

UMF honors Pate with John Wesley Circuit Rider Award

Pinehurst attorney, W. Daniel Pate, recently received the 2010 John Wesley Circuit Rider Award from the Raleigh-based United Methodist Foundation.

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr., resident bishop of the North Carolina Conference, presented the Award to Pate during a recent UMF board meeting.

The John Wesley Circuit Rider Award recognizes the special efforts of a select number of individuals who, because of their significant steward leadership, have given much in resource and service to the Foundation in support of United Methodist ministry throughout the conference.

The bronze cast statue was designed and produced by the late North Carolina artist Frank Creech in 1983.

Pate has been a member of UMF's Board of Directors since 1993. During his tenure, he has served as Board Secretary and Vice President. In 2003, Pate was elected President and recently completed his seventh year in that role.

Under Pate's leadership, the Foundation's total assets have grown from just under \$54 million to more than \$104 million.

UMF has also increased its number of investment partners from 660 accounts belonging to 255 churches, agencies, institutions and individual donors, to 829 accounts belonging to 320 investment partners.

"The success of UMF's stewardship ministry is not measured solely by the assets under management but, more importantly, by the

number of church relationships and the increasing number of local United Methodist Church leaders who turn to United Methodist Foundation for trusted and cost-effective money management services, legacy giving education and stewardship program services for their members," said Lynn James, executive director of the foundation.

"This aspect of the Foundation's stewardship ministry is extremely important to Dan and, during his tenure as UMF President, he led the Board not only through the nation's most difficult economic period since UMF was established in 1955, but also in the Foundation's most significant increase in staff and funding for its services in the Foundation's history," said James.

"Each generation of board leadership has strengthened UMF's stewardship ministry. Dan has not only continued this valued tradition, but has—with confidence and expert attention to details—kept the Foundation focused on its mission and purpose even during extremely challenging times," James said.

"As a result, the Foundation has not only survived but has thrived and grown in service benefiting the ministries of churches, agencies, institutions throughout the North Carolina Conference."

Founded in 1955, UMF provides endowment and fund investment consultation, gift and estate planning seminars for churches, and confidential gift and estate planning services for individuals who wish to invest in the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church.

UMF currently manages just over \$100 million in 829 accounts on behalf of more than 320 churches, agencies, institutions and ministries of the NC Conference.

Over the past 25 years, the average annual "return on investment" for churches invested in the Foundation's long-term Balanced Fund has been 7.5 percent net of fees.



Bishop Al Gwinn presents the Wesley Circuit Rider Award to W. Daniel Pate. The award recognizes Pate's outstanding steward leadership and service as President of UMF from February 2003 through February 2010.

New Hope UMC observes Holy Week

By Patricia Walker Murphy *

Holy Week at New Hope UMC in Poplar Branch began Palm Sunday, when the children entered waving palms and handing them out to the worshipers. The palms and the biblical sermon of the Passion (Palm Sunday) were a reminder to all that Jesus is there for everyone, over 2000 years ago, today, and everyday.

"It was like living in a Bible story. The children were very excited about waving their palms and handing them out to everyone in church," said Lindsay Chambers, head of the Children's Ministry.

At sundown on Holy Thursday, April 1, worshippers visited the 14 Stations of the Cross outside on the church lawn. Worshippers took turns carrying the wooden cross to each station. Once at a station, the faithful viewed a picture of Christ which represented that station. The Rev. Bill Masciangelo read scripture at each station and a Centurion, played by Jimmy Darnell, would express his feelings on the events that were taking place.

Worshippers then responded by reading prayers and singing hymns. Helen Godfrey said, "I felt very humbled and sad when we walked the 14

stations. It brought a reality to the experience of Jesus' last hours which I had never felt before."

The Stations of the Cross refers to the liturgical practice of using various events in the final hours of Jesus' life as a structure for prayer and meditation. Upon completion of the Stations of the Cross, everyone entered the church for the service, darkening of the church and stripping of the sanctuary.

On Good Friday at noon, participants again walked the Stations of the Cross outside on the Church lawn. This was a time to reflect on the final days and hours of Jesus' life.

That evening, the emotional aspects of the Passion story, the betrayal, abandonment, and agony of the events were re-created at a Tenebrae service. Worship began with the church in candlelight. During the service each candle was extinguished until only the Christ candle remained. Masciangelo then read the seven last sentences that Jesus spoke from the Cross.

Then the Christ candle was extinguished, leaving the congregation in near total darkness—and near total devastation. The congregation sat in

See "New Hope," page 13



Participants attending all or part of the Cross-Racial Retreat at Camp Rockfish.

Cross-racial appointments From page 8

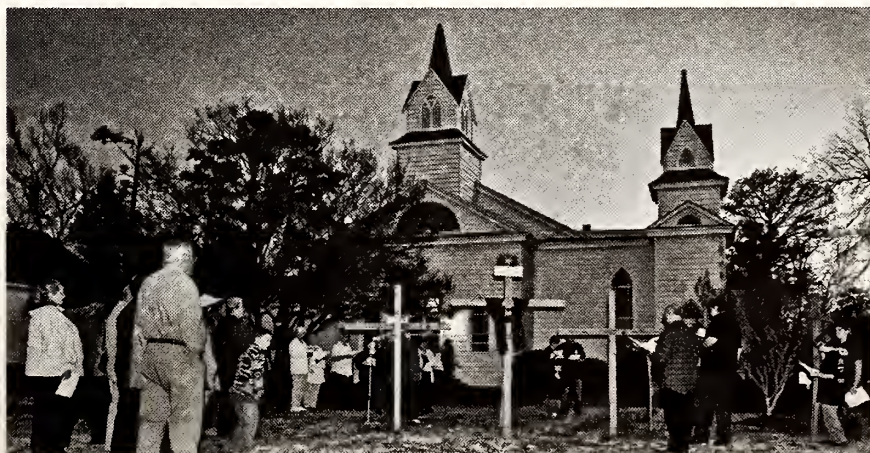
appointment-making and their relationships with pastor parish/staff relations committees.

Moderating the discussion was the Rev. Herbert Lowry. An evening multicultural celebration was led by the Rev. Paul Woo-II Lee with Dr. Puru-shotham preaching.

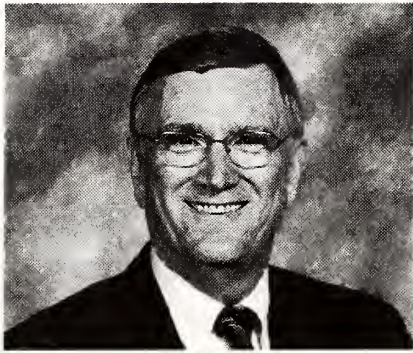
The group concluded the last day with a time of building a covenant

that persons in cross-racial appointments can use as a guide and support as they perform ministry in the local church and conference.

Closing Communion was led by the Rev. Edgar DeJesus, with the closing sermon by Bishop Al Gwinn. Dr. Lawrence Johnson, conference director of multicultural ministries, coordinated the event.



Walking the Stations of the Cross, worshippers gather at Station 14, Christ is laid in the tomb.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

June 6, 2010

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1
"Visible to God"

Up and down the sidewalks of Tupelo, Mississippi, there are artistic, metal outlines of guitars. Every half block or so, there is another guitar, one painted in wild, garish colors and the next in subdued pastels.

To even the casual visitor, it is clear why the folks of Tupelo festoon their public spaces with guitars: Tupelo is the birthplace of Elvis Presley. He bought his first guitar at a hardware store in Tupelo.

These street guitars give witness to this city's heritage and pride.

This week's lesson is Paul's celebration of the way the Christians in Thessalonica gave witness to their faith in Jesus Christ.

If Tupelo uses guitars to testify to its place in musical history, the Thessalonian Church used their daily lives to testify to the place of Jesus Christ in their midst.

In fact, folks far and wide (Macedonia and Achaia) knew of the faithfulness of the Christians in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

What witness is given on the sidewalks of your life? How do you give public witness to the importance of Jesus Christ in your journey?

What sign is there "every block or so" that Jesus Christ is Lord? Guitars are one thing; a life of witness is quite another.

Paul reports several ways faith is made visible. One way is the gift of hospitality (1 Thessalonians 1:9a). Another way is changed values (1 Thessalonians 1:9b).

Another way is an expectation of victory in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Another way is the hard work of loving (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Another way is a life lived in joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Another way is to follow the example of Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:6). Another way is to keep the faith in spite of persecution (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Paul has provided a long list. I wish it were shorter.

If there was only one way to witness to Jesus Christ, I might be able to say, "Sorry. One size does not fit all," and excuse myself from faithfulness of witness. But Paul has laid a series of ways of being faithful. Surely, one of them fits me!

Charles Wesley wrote "Let us plead for faith alone, faith which by our works is shown..." As Elvis used to say, "Than' ya' very much. Than' ya' very much."

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *An Altar in the World* (Harper One), Barbara Brown Taylor has written: "One of the reasons I remain a Christian-in-progress is the peculiar Christian insistence that God is revealed in humankind—not just in human form but also in human being."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Make me a faithful witness, Lord, faithful to who you are, and faithful to who you would have me be..."

June 13, 2010

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2
"Pleasing to God"

Do you think God gets excited when we do something that pleases God?

When Paul says we have been entrusted with pleasing God (1 Thessalonians 2:4), the word he chooses for "pleases" is a word that has roots in another word that means "exciting emotion."

Does God get excited when we do something that gives God pleasure?

Paul is clear that if we have to choose between pleasing people and pleasing God, our priority is, of course, pleasing God (1 Thessalonians 2:4).

Does this mean that we cannot please God and, at the same time, please others? (After all, there is that pesky verse in Matthew 6:24 about not being able to serve two masters.)

Maybe it is not so simple. (Does it ring true to hear a pastor say "I must be pleasing God because I have been run out of four straight congrega-

tions who did not like me"?) Note that when Paul gives illustrations of how he himself has "pleased God" in his work among the Thessalonians, Paul speaks of relationships that indeed would please God and people.

He was gentle (v. 7). He was caring as a nurse (v. 7). He cared deeply (v. 8). He had a close relationship with others (v. 8). He worked hard to help (v. 9). He had high moral standards (v. 10). He was like an encouraging father (v. 11).

Well, you get the idea: what Paul did was pleasing to God (got God excited) and was a pleasing joy to those among whom he ministered.

Sometimes, obedience to God brings a person into conflict with authorities (1 Thessalonians 2:2).

Sometimes, obedience to God brings a person into conflict with custom and common practice.

Sometimes, obedience to God brings a person into a hostile environment.

But not always. The goal is not always to be setting out to be in conflict. The goal is not always to be challenging custom. The goal is not always to encourage hostility.

The goal is to please God and sometimes that means pleasing others and sometimes it does not.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Howard Owen's novel *Fat Lightning* (Harper Perennial) one of characters was described like this: "Everybody in Monacan and the northern half of Mosby County seemed to know not to get Lot Chastain started. Carter said he'd seen him get into a fight with a man over whether you should use red pepper and Vaseline to keep snakes out of a bluebird house. Lot's argument was that if God meant for the snakes to get the bluebirds, then it was His will and we should not do anything to get in the way of His will."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Show me Your will, O God, so that I can please You. Give me strength and courage, O God, so that when I hear Your will, I can be strong enough and courageous enough to do it. Open my heart to new possibilities; open my path to

new journeys; and always keep me within Your care..."

June 20, 2010

Text: 1 Thessalonians 3
"Sustained Through Encouragement"

In an upstairs filing cabinet, I keep what I call my "Yes File."

Into that folder goes the occasional card, letter, or e-mail in which someone has thanked me, complimented me, or even bragged on me.

Over the years, those marks of encouragement have been a source of nourishment in times of emotional hunger; they have been like the burst of oxygen for the runner who has hit the wall in an important race.

Encouragement is an important gift for us to give one another.

In this week's study text, the apostle Paul speaks both of the encouragement he offered to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 3:2) and the encouragement he received from the believers in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:7).

Encouragement is an important gift for us to give one another.

The New Testament word translated as "encourage" or "encouragement" in these verses is *parakalēō*. Literally, it means "to call alongside."

What a great way to understand the impact of encouragement! When you encourage me, you come and stand next to me!

The King James Version of the Bible translates the word *parakalēō* as "comfort."

The Emphasized New Testament renders the word as "console."

The Amplified New Testament uses three words for the translation: "exhort and comfort and encourage."

This is a valuable expression of the relationship we can have with one another, coming alongside: encouragement is an important gift for us to give one another.

Over and over again in 1 Thessalonians, Paul returns to this theme of "encouraging by loving": 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 3:7, 3:12, 4:9-10, 4:18, 5:11-15. "Encourage the faint-

June adult Bible study continued from page 12

hearted" is among the final words of advice that the apostle offers in this letter to the brave Church at Thessalonica.

It is as if he says, "If someone among you is about to slip from faithfulness, go stand beside him, go be near to her." Encouragement is an important gift for us to give one another.

Dr. David daSilva has written that "burnout is epidemic in the pastoral profession."

That might come to us as a hint of one practical way we can live out this Pauline emphasis on encouragement. How about a card or e-mail to those who are pastors among us, a note of thanksgiving or support or comfort?

Such encouragement gives a power to the entire community of faith; after all, encouragement is an important gift for us to give one another.

What Someone Else Has Said:

James Moore has written (*Standing on the Promises or Sitting on the Premises*, Dimensions for Living): "It's important to remember that (in English) the word 'encourage' literally means 'to put the heart in.' The word 'discourage' means 'to tear the heart out.'"

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord, who needs encouragement?..."

June 27, 2010

**Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
"Demonstrated in Action"**

Much of the New Testament contains a call to *agape*, that self-giving, undeserved love that is offered to us by God. It is the kind of love to which we are invited: "...and the greatest of these is *agape*", self-giving, undeserved love that we extend to others (1 Corinthians 13:13).

In these verses in 1 Thessalonians, Paul is calling for another kind of love: *philadelphia*—the kind of brotherly and sisterly love that cares for family (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

Without diminishing the call to love strangers (Hebrews 13:2), Paul calls for what, in some cases, may be an even more difficult way of loving: loving those you know best and who know you best.

If someone has come from a family high on dysfunction and low on mutuality, this injunction to have brotherly and sisterly love might ring hollow.

Let's hear it as God's call to a new kind of family.

In Christ, believers have been born anew with a new, common Parent (Matthew 12:46-50, Romans 8:14-17, Hebrews 2:10-11).

In this new family, siblings look out for each other, warn each other of dangers, and help each become the best he or she can be.

The context for what Paul says about family life within the faith is his more broad "Nike-kind of holiness."

The Nike commercial punch line ("Just do it") is almost an echo of 1 Thessalonians 4:1: "...Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing) you should do so more and more." Just do it!

Although there are indeed times of moral gray, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that most of the time they indeed do know what is the loving thing to do (4:1); they indeed do know how to live as God's holy family (4:6); they indeed do know how to be in holy sexual relationships (4:3). Just do it!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Charles Taylor's tome *A Secular Age* (Belknap Harvard), the philosopher has written: "This is the basis for that sanctification of ordinary life, which I want to claim has had a tremendous formative effect on our civilization, spilling beyond the original religious variant into a myriad secular forms. It has two facets: it promotes ordinary life, as a site for the highest forms of Christian life; and it also has an anti-elitist thrust... The mighty are cast down from their seats, and the humble and meek are exalted."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Across the years, I hear Your call, O God. As You spoke to Your servant Paul, as You spoke to Your people in Thessalonica, as You spoke through the saints who preserved this text, You speak now to me. I hear the echo of the saints around the throne: Holy, holy, holy, and I hear a call to be holy..."



On Easter Sunday, Donna L. Jones received a certificate of membership from Pastor Bill Masciangelo.

New Hope UMC from page 11

silent darkness and then there was a loud bang to signify the stone being rolled to seal the grave. The service ended, and the people left in silence.

"It was the most moving service I have ever been to and one that I will not forget. I was startled when I heard the loud noise, but it helped me to understand just what it was that Jesus did for me," said Lee Stallings.

A prayer vigil was then held through Sunday, April 4 at 5:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday, the day of Resurrection, a Sunrise Service was held on the Little River in Durants Neck. Worshippers continued their celebration at the Church sanctuary at 8:30 a.m. with the decorating of a six foot wooden cross with flowers.

The traditional Easter Communion Service began at 9:00 a.m. On the holiest of Christian holidays New Hope UMC welcomed into church membership, Donna Leola Jones. The church was further blessed as on this day Sonna Louise was baptized. "Our prayer for Sonna Louise is indeed that in God's power she may come to live life in all its fullness in this world and in God's good time in the world to come. And as each of us remembers our own baptism, we rejoice that we are too are given a part of God's new life in Christ," said Masciangelo.

* Patricia Walker Murphy is staff writer for New Hope UMC.

CLASSIFIEDS

KITCHEN equipment for sale. 2-door commercial refrigerator, 2-door commercial freezer, grill, deep-fat fryer, 2-burner stove. Can be seen at the Methodist Building. Call Shirley at 919-832-9560, ext. 239.

WANTED: Children's Program Coordinator, First United Methodist Church in Morehead City is seeking a Children's Program Coordinator, full or part-time. Please e-mail resume to wwalker3@ec.rr.com or call 252-726-7102.

PT CONTEMPORARY Musician - Front Street UMC, Burlington, is looking for a contemporary worship musician. Position includes leadership of praise band and singers in weekly rehearsals and Sunday worship (9:00 am), participation in chancel choir and rehearsals, planning worship with pastors. Strong keyboard skills are preferred. Approximately 18 hrs/wk. Position available mid-May. For full job description or to apply, email: mrold@nccumc.org

ATLANTIC BEACH ocean-front condo available at Villa Dunescape. 3 bdrms, 2½ baths, screened porch, pool, 4 TV's, WIFI connection. \$125.00 per day. Contact Mildred Dillon in Raleigh at (919) 833-3572 or e-mail mcadillon@mindspring.com.

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska B 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom townhouse, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs! Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccumc.org

EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

LAKE JUNALUSKA lakeview eff. apt. No steps! Sleeps 4, full kit. \$40 nite/\$250 wk. NP/NS. Call 828-456-5183.

GREAT RATES, TARGETED AUDIENCE For NCCC Advocate display advertising rates or to place a classified ad, contact LeeAnne Thornton at 800-849-4433 or email lbthornton@nccumc.org.

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Convocation on Rural Church

Pastors of rural churches that are eligible for Duke Endowment grants are invited to make plans to attend Duke Divinity School's 2010 Convocation on the Rural Church: The Grace of Rural Ministry. This event will be held Aug. 23-25 at the Embassy Suites Ocean-Front Hotel in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Using support from the Duke Endowment, costs will be kept to a minimum. Online registration opens May 24. Eligible pastors will receive more information and a link to the registration site prior to this date. Registrations will not be accepted before this time.

Upcoming lay speaker training events and contacts

Lay speaker trainings have been scheduled in the NC Conference as follows:

- ♦ Rocky Mount District, 5/1, Advanced Training, call the District Office - 252-234-0472/236-5490 to register.
- ♦ Burlington District, 5/21, Advanced Training, call Bonnie Francis - 336-449-9636 to register.

North Carolina Conference Historical Society Workshop

The NC Conference Archives and History Commission and Historical Society are sponsoring a workshop that will provide teaching and learning for gathering oral histories and employing media to preserve local church history on October 2 at First UMC, Wilson, from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Excellent leadership will help participants use formats and technologies to collect and store sacred memories. A box lunch is the only cost (free will offering) for this professional training experience. Please register with Robin Harry at rharry@nccumc.org. Church historians and their guests (including media-savvy youth) are encouraged to attend.

Youth 2011 event website launches

A website kicking off Youth 2011, next year's national youth gathering for The United Methodist Church, is now online with information and links about the quadrennial event sponsored by Young People's Ministries, a division of The General Board of Discipleship. For the first time, the four-day conference in July 2011 will be held twice on opposite sides of the country to better serve the denomination. The event theme is "More Than," and the youth participants will be shown that with the presence of God they can be "more than" just ordinary. The launch of www.youth2011.org provides a gateway to this event for youth and their leaders. Youth 2011 will be held at Purdue University in West Lafayette on July 13-17 and at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento on July 27-31.

DISCIPLE study trainings scheduled

The Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, in partnership with The Duke Endowment, will offer two free trainings for NC Conference leaders of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP in September. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call 336-454-5348.

Executive session for clergy

The Executive Session for all clergy members will be held on May 14 at First UMC, Rocky Mount from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Information will be forthcoming regarding parking. Attendance is expected of all clergy members; however, only Full Connection Members and Lay Members of the Board of Ordained Ministry have vote.

Camping Ministries offering discount to children of clergy

Camp & Retreat Ministries is excited to offer a discount for children of pastors in the North Carolina United Methodist Conference. Children of pastors can go to any regular one-week camp program at Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee or Rockfish for a 50% discount. If you have any questions, contact one of the camps or Dail Ballard at 910-352-8081.

Mandatory sexual ethics training

All clergy under episcopal appointment are required to attend sexual ethics training in 2010. These mandatory trainings will be held across the Conference this fall. While they are scheduled around district clusters, any clergyperson may attend any training, but all clergy must attend at least one.

Retired clergy not serving in an appointed position are not required to attend but they are welcome.

Sign-in will be required. Each training will begin at 10 a.m. and last until 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

- Sept. 27: at St. Luke: Sanford (Burlington, Durham, Sanford Districts)
- Oct. 4: at Centenary: Smithfield (Goldsboro, Raleigh, Rocky Mount Districts)
- Oct. 21: at First: Laurinburg (Fayetteville, Rockingham, Wilmington Districts)
- Oct. 25: at St. James: Greenville (Elizabeth City, Greenville, New Bern Districts)
- Nov. 4: TBA in Raleigh (Make-up day at locations)

Facilitators from the Methodist Home for Children will lead the training. In order to help prepare materials, these leaders have asked for feedback from clergy. Please take a moment to answer a few questions in the survey found at the following link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QJ2VBK3>. Please complete the survey by April 25.

conference CALENDAR

May

- 6 National Day of Prayer
- 9 Methodist Retirement Homes Special Offering
- Mothers' Day/Festival of the Christian Home
- 11-13 Balancing Your Ministry, Renewing Your Life, retreat sponsored by the Academy for Leadership Excellence, Wrightsville Beach
- 14 2010 Clergy Session of the NC Annual Conference, 10 a.m., First UMC; Rocky Mount
- 14-15 Conference UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat. Centenary UMC: Smithfield
- 17 Conference Connectional Table Meeting, UM Building, Raleigh
- 20-28 Licensing School, NC Wesleyan, Rocky Mount
- 23 Annual Conference Briefing Sessions - Video Conference (See page 7)

- 23 Pentecost Sunday
- 30 Peace With Justice Sunday

June

- 10-12 Annual Conference, Greenville, NC
- 20 Father's Day
- 20-25 Fellowship of United Methodists Music & Worship Arts Week, Lake Junaluska
- 21-26 Summer Breakaway for Youth, Louisburg College
- 22 Moving Day for Pastors changing appointments
- 24 New Pastor Orientation, Garner UMC
- 24-27 UMW South Atlantic Regional School, Ferrum College, Ferrum, VA
- 27 First Sunday in new pulpits for pastors changing appointments

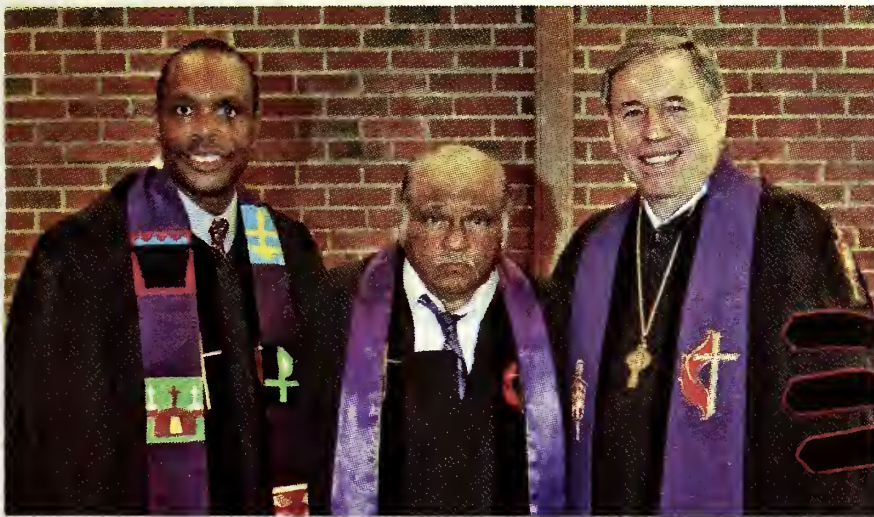
NC Conference events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

Around the CONFERENCE



Conference Youth Lay Speaking Training

Twenty young people from across the conference participated in the annual Youth Lay Speaking training on Saturday, March 27. In addition to training for speaking before groups, class members received assistance in identifying and claiming the ministries to which they were called. Each class member was asked to focus on their call, their core values and gifts and to write about their call. Linda Harris, conference director of Lay Speaking, taught the class. Shown above are the training participants in front of the United Methodist Building in Raleigh.



L-R: The Rev. Leonard Fairley, the Rev. Bill James Locklear, and Bishop Al Gwinn officiated at the building dedication service at Pleasant Grove UMC, Rowland.

Pleasant Grove UMC, Rowland, holds dedication service

A dedication service was held at Pleasant Grove UMC, Rowland, on Sunday, Feb. 28, during the morning worship. Bishop Alfred W. Gwinn, Jr.; the Rev. Leonard Fairley, Rockingham District superintendent; and the Rev. Bill James Locklear, pastor of Pleasant Grove, officiated. The service was held after completion of a major church renovation project that began four years ago.

Locklear led the congregational prayer concerns followed by a pastoral prayer delivered by District Superintendent Fairley. Bishop Gwinn led the Congregational Responsive Act of Dedication and provided the morning message. Special music was given by The Children's Choir, Ms. Jammi Jones and Charles Bell.

Gary Wayne Locklear, home missionary for the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry (RDNACM), spoke on the incep-

tion of the renovation project. The process began as the RDNACM gave funding to provide a new roof for Pleasant Grove UMC. At the urging and motivation of Rev. Locklear, the church raised money and applied for grants through Duke Endowment.

The refurbishment yielded all new church windows, a paved parking lot and the addition of a storage building. Extensive interior renovation included complete remodeling of the bathrooms and kitchen and new tile flooring, lighting fixtures, sheetrock, and paint throughout the church.

New pulpit furniture and pianos were added in the sanctuary. New fellowship hall and classroom furniture was also purchased. A sound room was built to house the audio system for the sanctuary. The last addition was the construction of a Bell Tower on the church grounds adorned with a cross on top.



Worshipful work at Millbrook UMC, Raleigh

Millbrook UMC in Raleigh turned their 11 a.m. service into worshipful work on Sunday, May 11. Many members attended the traditional worship service at 8:30 a.m. The 9:45 a.m. contemporary service and the 11 a.m. traditional services were combined in the Pryor-Bradford Christian Ministry Center, and 295 members packaged over 10,000 meals for Stop Hunger Now. The meals will be used to feed hungry people throughout the world. "All ages from children to older adults worked together at our 'packaging' stations," said the Rev. Randy Innes, senior pastor. After the packing of food was completed, the members joined together in an abbreviated 20-minute worship service, Innes said.

Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

A Heartfelt Thank You...

...to the United Methodist Women, pastors and members of the churches in the North Carolina Conference for supporting our mission through a special offering for Methodist Home for Children Sunday 2010.



**You have helped us make a difference
in the world...one child at a time.**

Your generosity helps clothe, feed and provide for children in our care. Your gifts also support our foster and adoptive parents who offer safe and loving homes for children across North Carolina. **Thank you.**

In service to God, Methodist Home for Children builds on the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual strengths of children, youth, and families, and affirms their worth.

1.888.305.4321 www.mhfc.org

Davis Street UMC hosts new community garden



In the garden, gardeners of all ages will learn about healthy foods and the connections between God, the land, and God's children.

Los Vecinos (The Neighbors), the Hispanic Ministries Initiative of the Burlington District recently held a ground breaking ceremony for the Common Ground Community Garden at Davis Street UMC, Burlington. The service included an opening prayer by Dr. Alan Sasser, senior pastor at Davis Street, remarks from the Rev. Bill Gattis, Burlington district superintendent, and participants from other denominations including The Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter; First Reformed Church, UCC; and First Presbyterian Church. Helping coordinate the garden effort are staff from Davis Street as well as Duke Divinity school interns Rosario V. Bottari and Charles Walters. Following the ceremony, participants were invited to spend time in the garden to help prepare the soil for planting.



Following the ceremony, participants were invited to spend time in the garden to help prepare the soil for planting. Goals for the garden include the building of community of food and friendships, that access to healthy food is increased, that relationships form across age, culture, race and income. Garden organizers hope to engage participation from throughout the Burlington community. Garden workdays are held on Saturday mornings.

Support affirmed for church's Four Areas of Focus

Research conducted by United Methodist Communications on behalf of the Connectional Table reveals widespread denominational support for the Church's four Areas of Focus, adopted by the 2008 General Conference.

"The research shows that most respondents believe that the Areas of Focus are very important for the church," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "But we also heard that knowledge about the areas is still somewhat limited."

"General Conference affirmed the four Areas of Focus because they are essential areas of ministry most of our vital local churches are already doing," said Bishop John Hopkins, chair of the Connectional Table. "It is more important that we do the work than know the language of the areas of focus. Our heartwarming response to the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile demonstrates that United Methodists understand the importance of sharing the love of Jesus Christ to those who are poor and without adequate medical care."

Support is uniformly strong for three of the four areas: engaging in ministry with the poor, developing principled Christian leaders, and creating new places for new people/revitalizing existing congregations. Fewer people indicated that combating diseases of poverty is very important for the denomination, although many who indicated that initiatives are not important said they lacked enough information to have an opinion.

Although respondents reported limited knowledge of the four Areas of Focus, they indicated greater familiarity, however, with initiatives affiliated with the areas, including the Nothing But Nets anti-malaria initiative and the Rethink Church advertising and welcoming campaign.

Survey participants reported that their local churches are active in many of the areas associated with the Areas of Focus, including 54 percent of pastors who said that their church had participated in Nothing But Nets during the last year.

"This feedback reveals opportunities to align the messaging of the church more closely with the posi-

tive work it is doing," said Hollon.

Hollon points to a survey question that asked respondents if their church understands the concept of connectionalism. Just 18 percent of pastors, 14 percent of leaders, and 12 percent of members agreed strongly that their church understands connectionalism.

"As a connectional church, we are united by a common mission and governance that allow us to reach into the world as the hands and feet of Christ," said Hollon. "This research points to the need to build

understanding about the connection by communicating how it extends our reach and the scale of our abilities to create change as followers of Jesus. The connectional reach of The United Methodist Church empowers each of us to achieve more together than we could achieve individually or as a single congregation. It makes us much bigger than ourselves, able to do much greater work."

The study, conducted in December 2009, includes survey results from 2,895 pastors, 805 church leaders, and 1,416 members.

The Four Areas of Focus of The United Methodist Church are:

1

Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world



2

Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations



3

Engaging in ministry with the poor



4

Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally.





INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pastors attend Church & Society's Young Clergy Forum . . .	2
MERCI needs cleaning buckets.	3
Conference headquarters relocating	3
July Bible Study	24
HopeWalk connects youth in Kenya and Wilmington. . .	28



On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, June 10-12, approximately 1500 clergy and lay persons from churches across the NC Conference will gather in Greenville for the Annual Conference.

In this issue of the *North Carolina Conference Christian Advocate*, pages 5-22 contain reference materials for Conference members including general information and specific items that will be before the Conference for action. Only those parts of reports requiring a vote are included.

Complete reports are available on the conference website, nccumc.org, under Events and Annual Conference.

For anyone who cannot attend but is interested in what happens at Conference, all sessions are available on the Internet through video streaming.

Information on how to connect to the video streaming will be listed on the Conference website several days before the Conference which begins on June 10.

The streaming page has a feature that allows those watching to submit a question or statement over the "chat" option.

This issue also features suggestions on welcoming a new pastor, a Bible Study, and items about ministry taking place across the 56 counties in the North Carolina Conference.

Welcoming a new pastor: 50 ideas

On Tuesday, June 22, local churches in the North Carolina Conference will welcome their pastors. Some of these pastors continue serving at the same location of ministry, but over 125 pastors will begin new appointments.

Following are 50 suggestions for welcoming new pastors. Some could also be adapted to welcome a returning pastor.

By Robert Crossman *

Prepare to welcome your new pastor

1. Open your hearts and decide that you are going to love your new pastor.
2. Begin praying daily for the new pastor and family, even as you continue to pray for your departing pastor and family.
3. Invite church members individually to send cards of welcome and encouragement to the incoming pastor.
4. Know that welcoming your new pastor in genuine and effective ways lays the ground work for a healthy and vital relationship and the development of stable, long-term ministries together.
5. Plan for the transition. Occasionally, important welcoming gestures are missed with everyone thinking someone else is handling these details.
6. Appoint a specific liaison person to whom the pastor can go for help and information during the transition.

Say goodbye to your current pastor in a healthy way

7. Show love, regard, and even grief, for your departing pastor. This is one of the best things you can do for the new pastor.
8. Acknowledge the change in public ways. Especially in the case of a much-beloved pastor, this allows

the congregation better to let go and receive the new pastor.

9. Provide the congregation the opportunity to say thank you and good-bye to the outgoing pastor, even if things have not always gone well.
10. Find appropriate occasions – in worship and at other times -- to thank the outgoing pastor.
11. Express appreciation in ways that are consistent with what you have done in the past.
12. Consider giving the pastor the last two weeks off. This helps the pastor enter the new situation rested and gives an emotional buffer between one pastor's last Sunday and another pastor's first Sunday.
13. Plan goodbye celebrations prior to the beginning of the two weeks off.
14. Provide information to the local media about the outgoing pastor's accomplishments and future plans.
15. Do not invite the former pastor to return for weddings, funerals, or baptisms. This allows your former pastor to engage fully with his or her new congregation and it establishes your new pastor as everyone's pastor from the beginning.

Make things move-in ready

16. Make sure the parsonage and pastor's office are clean and ready. Offer to provide help or a cleaning service if needed.
17. Determine if the parsonage is in need of repairs or painting. Consult the outgoing and incoming pastors about timing so as not to disrupt the lives of either party. Do not ask a new pastor to move into a parsonage "under construction."

18. Consult the new pastor on paint, design, or furnishings issues.
19. Offer to have someone cut the parsonage grass.
20. Make sure the new pastor and church officials are clear on who and how moving expenses are paid and all matters related to compensation, benefits, and reimbursement policies.

Welcome your pastor on moving day

21. Stock the parsonage refrigerator and pantry with some staples.
22. Make sure there are kid-friendly foods and snacks in the refrigerator if children are arriving.
23. Have a small group on hand to greet the new pastor and family when they arrive and to help as needed.
24. Offer child care if there is an infant or toddler in the household.
25. Invite children in the household to do things with others of their same age.
26. Welcome any youth in the household by having church youth group members stop by and offer to show them around.

Continue the welcome during the entry period

27. Take food over for the first few days. Many churches continue the practice of having a "pounding" for the new pastor when persons bring food items.
28. Provide a map with directions to local dry cleaners, grocery store, drug store, veterinarian, etc., and information on local options for

See "Welcoming a new pastor," page 4

NCC is piloting new scouting ministry post

The United Methodist Office of Scouting Ministries is looking for advocates to help NC Conference churches establish and expand scouting ministry opportunities.

The National Office of Scouting Ministries has selected the area as a pilot conference to test the effectiveness of "scouting ministry specialists."

Volunteer specialists will provide neighboring churches with information about the Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY), training opportunities, resources for Scout Sunday and various awards for young people and adults.

Scouting ministry specialists will also help churches enrich their relationship with existing Scout units. "Too frequently, churches treat troops as if they are just renting space instead of being a vital part of their ministry," said Larry Coppock national director of scouting ministries. Fifty percent of the Scouts in troops chartered by United Methodist churches are unchurched.

"Venturing Crews can also expand youth ministries," said Coppock.

NC Conference Scouting Coordinator Randy Gordon said "scouting offers Outreach and in-reach ministries, Opportunities for intergenerational experiences, Evangelism initiatives, Mission programs, and Servant leader growth opportunities.

"It's a ministry that truly makes disciples for Christ," said Gordon. "These are the very activities that our church needs in order to build healthy churches and to strengthen our conference."

For information about becoming a scouting ministry specialist, email LaNisha Sayles at lsayles@gcummm.org or call 1-866-297-4312.



Participants in the 2010 GBCS Young Clergy Forum are shown outside the United Methodist Building located just across the lawn from the US Capitol. During the three-day forum, young clergy learned how the GBCS champions the Social Principles to the nation's top political leaders. The Board's location on Capital Hill provides a unique opportunity for the Church to witness to its beliefs on a national level. Representatives from the NC Conference were the Rev. David Beam (back row, sixth from left) and the Rev. Jessie Larkins (second row, first on right standing).

NC pastors attend Board of Church and Society's Young Clergy Forum

By Jesse Larkins and David Beam *

What do bottled water, nuclear disarmament, and a living wage have in common? They're all issues on which The United Methodist Church has taken a position through its Social Principles. The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) is the United Methodist organization that advocates for these positions politically. The GBCS works to equip local churches with the resources necessary to incorporate acts of justice into their communities.

The primary task of the GBCS is to "seek the implementation of the Social Principles" and to "provide forthright witness and action on issues of human well-being, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation." (§1004).

This past March, the GBCS invited each Conference to nominate young clergy, (defined as clergy serving under appointment under the age of 35), to travel to Washington, DC to learn about the Board's work.

In total, 53 pastors from 29 conferences met at the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill. Representatives of the North Carolina Conference included the Rev. Jessie Larkins (Mt. Sylvan: DU) and the Rev. David Beam (First UMC: Rocky Mount).

During the three-day forum, young clergy learned how the GBCS champions the Social Principles to the nation's top political leaders. The Board's location on Capital Hill provides a unique opportunity for the Church to witness to its beliefs on a national level.

Some of the 2010 legislative priorities of the board include advocacy for: reform of the US health-care system, just and humane immigration reform, the elimination of child hunger, the global climate crisis, and the end of global poverty.

Because of its location, the Board is able to educate United Methodists on many key issues confronting society. The GBCS uses a United Methodist theological perspective to interpret issues such as: Arab-American relations, race relations, the Israeli-Palestinian controversy, human-trafficking, and more.

The Young Clergy Forum educates clergy on the resources available to local congregations as they work to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

During the forum, GBCS staff spent time talking with clergy about the most pressing issues within their local congregations. Participants spoke with GBCS General Secretary Jim Winkler about the Board's advocacy work and met with Barry Black, chaplain of the Senate, to discuss his role as spiritual advisor to elected officials. During afternoon breaks, clergy toured the US Capitol and explored the city's historic landmarks.

While the United Methodist Church's engagement in political advocacy is not always popular, it is one way the church bears witness to Christ. Perhaps Mahatma Gandhi said it best when he said, "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is."

This past March, young pastors from across the country experienced firsthand the strength of the United Methodist Connection as they witnessed the ministry of the General Board of Church and Society—a ministry that is truly "faith in action."

* The Rev. David Beam (First UMC: Rocky Mount) and the Rev. Jessie Larkins (Mt. Sylvan UMC: Durham) represented the North Carolina Conference at GBCS Young Clergy Forum.

Keeping you connected

North Carolina Conference Christian

ADVOCATE

Special Annual Conference subscription rate. See back page for details.

Cleaning kits urgently needed to restock MERCI Center

In response to the flooding in Tennessee, MERCI Center Ministries is taking immediate donations of cleaning kits (previously called flood buckets) Please make delivery of your cleaning kits to MERCI Center located at: 676 Community Dr., Goldsboro, NC 27530. To coordinate the time of your delivery, please call MERCI at: 919-739-9167 or 888-440-9167.

MERCI Center is now serving as an UMCOR Relief Supply Network member. This affiliation promotes the interaction of the agencies in the collection and distribution of relief supplies in domestic and international emergencies. This makes adequate stocks of disaster relief kits a continuing need.

MERCI joins the following organizations in a united force of readiness to respond in times of natural disaster: Mission Resource Center – Western NC Conference; Midwest Mission Distribution Center – North Central Jurisdiction; Eastbrook Mission Barn – Western PA Conference; UMCOR West Depot – Salt Lake City, UT; UMCOR Sager Brown Depot – Baldwin, LA.

Cleaning Kit Contents

Please ensure that your kit is packed EXACTLY as indicated below. Please do not place any additional items in the kit. If the requested item size is not available, go down to the next available size. If nothing is available in the requested or smaller size, put masking tape on the outside of the bucket saying, "This bucket contains no (name of item)." Estimated cost is \$55 per bucket. Please see Kit Assembly Information section below for details.

5-gallon bucket with resealable lid	Clothesline (two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.)
Bleach: two 1-qt. or one 82oz. bottle	5 dust masks
5 scouring pads	2 pair latex gloves
7 sponges	1 pair work gloves
1 scrub brush	24-bag roll of heavy-duty trash
18 cleaning towels (reusable wipes)	bags, 33-45 gallon (Remove roll
Liquid laundry detergent	from box before placing in bucket)
(two 25 oz. or one 50 oz. bottle)	1 insect repellent spray, 6-14 oz. can
1 12-16oz. bottle household cleaner	(Aerosol cans must have protective caps.)
50 clothes pins	1 air freshener, 8 or 9 oz. can
Disinfectant dish soap, 16-28 oz. bottle	(Aerosol cans must have protective caps.)

Important Kit Assembly Information

- ◆ All items included in kits must be NEW.
- ◆ All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items-nothing more.
- ◆ Do NOT include any personal notes, money or additional materials in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.
- ◆ Processing & Shipping Costs: Please enclose an envelope containing at least \$1.50 for each kit you send. This donation enables kits to be sent without delay to areas in need.

Change the World participation makes impact, now annual event

UMNS - More than 100,000 people from over 1,000 churches united with a common purpose over a 48-hour period: to make a world of difference in ways both large and small. United Methodists from 13 countries and every state in the U.S. energetically worked to build community locally and fight malaria globally during Change the World weekend, April 24-25.

Congregations at local churches rolled up their sleeves and took to the streets to feed the hungry, aid the homeless, visit the lonely, and more. From stocking food pantries and cleaning school grounds to washing cars and renovating homes, people of faith reached out to a world outside the four walls of their own churches. "The people of The United Methodist Church were on a mission to change the world in a hands-on kind of way—and we made an impact," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications.

Enthusiasm for the 2010 Change the World event was so great that it will become an annual event. "Churches are already gearing up for round two of Change the World," he said. Next year's event will be held May 14-15, 2011.

Conference headquarters move to new Garner location following Annual Conference

The United Methodist Building in Raleigh will be closed June 21-25 so that building staff can pack and move to the new conference headquarters in Garner.

Voice and e-mail messages can be left during June 21 and 22. Staff will respond when it is possible to do so.

E-mail, for building staff and conference clergy, plus websites and the telephone system will be disconnected Friday morning, June 25. Servers and the telephone system will then be moved to the new building.

The plan is to have the e-mails and websites operational, as well as telephone service, within 12 hours. However, unanticipated difficulties could delay restoration of service until Saturday morning, June 26.

As of June 28, the new address for the United Methodist Building will be 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, P.O. Box 1970, Garner, NC 27529. The primary telephone number will be (919) 779-6115. The toll free (WATS) line remains the same, 800-849-4433. Staff will continue to have the same telephone extension number and e-mail address.

Notice of publishing schedule change

The July and August editions of the *NC Conference Christian Advocate* will be combined into one issue. This is being done because of the relocation of the NC Conference headquarters from Raleigh to Garner in the weeks following Annual Conference. The July/August issue will feature a wrap up of the 2010 Annual Conference. In September, monthly issues resume.

The Unshakable Kingdom in a Shaking World

A Study Led By Renowned Bible Teacher,



Dr. Evelyn Laycock
October 11-14, 2010

Epworth By The Sea
St. Simons Island, Georgia

"Jesus taught that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. When this is the focus, there is **peace, love, justice, mercy, kindness and joy** to name a few. *In a world that is shaking we are ripe – dead ripe – for the re-discovery of the Kingdom of God.* What is the nature of the Kingdom of God?? Through the words of Jesus in the New Testament, please join with me as we seek the answer," Dr. Laycock.



Come study and learn from this noted Bible teacher who served for 35 years as Professor of Religion at Hiwassee College.

1.0 ceu's available for clergy.
For more information: www.epworthbythesea.org or call 912-638-8688

Welcoming a new pastor: 50 ideas continued from page 1

- internet and cable television providers.
- 29. Give gift certificates to several of your favorite local restaurants.
- 30. Give the pastor and family a welcome reception on the first Sunday.
- 31. Plan a worship celebration of the new appointment.
- 32. Invite the new pastor to any social events by held by Sunday School classes or other groups in the early months.
- 33. Make sure the pastor's spouse and children, if applicable, are invited to Sunday School and other appropriate small groups.
- 34. Continue to remember your

new pastor and family in your daily prayers.

Help the new pastor become familiar with the congregation

- 35. Introduce yourself to the pastor repeatedly! You have one name to learn, your pastor has many names to learn.
- 36. Wear name tags. Even if name tags are not a tradition, the congregation can wear them for a few weeks to help the pastor learn names.
- 37. Provide a current pictorial directory of all the church members.

- 38. Provide an up-to-date list of all church committees and officers.
- 39. Provide the new pastor with a tour of where things are kept inside the church and perhaps a floor plan of the facilities.
- 40. Orient the new pastor to information systems and the way records are kept.
- 41. Make sure the pastor has a list of home bound or nursing home members, a list of those struggling with long term illness, and a list of those still in grief over recent deaths in the family. Better yet, take the pastor and introduce them to each of these households.

- 42. Have an appropriate person offer to go with the pastor for introductions and support if there are particularly urgent pastoral situations (a member near death or a member who has just died).
- 43. Have a lay official offer to take the pastor to meet church members in their businesses or other work settings, if they are easily accessible.
- 44. Offer to help arrange small group sessions to meet and talk with the congregation.
- 45. Create a "church yellow pages" (a list of people in the church who have specific skills that a newcomer may find beneficial... auto mechanic, doctor, dentist, dry cleaners, book store, office supply, etc.)

Wakefield UMC receives grant for year-long program to approach worship in new ways

Wakefield UMC has received a \$11,000 grant to help in the development within the congregation of "not only a greater spirit of worship, but to help grow a deeper understanding of what worship is for those who profess Jesus Christ," said the Rev. Ed New, pastor of Wakefield.

The grant is given by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, MN.

"This grant will allow Wakefield UMC to implement a year-long, two-part program that would engage the entire congregation to approach worship in new ways with emphasis on the important foundational elements of the Christian faith as conveyed by the congregation's children," New said.

"This exploration of Wakefield UMC's developing identity, purpose and vision will strengthen and renew the meaning of worship within the congregation during this definitive time in the life of the church."

New believes this grant is a powerful boost for a new church's need to help believers grow as the

church grows. "It is our responsibility as a church and our responsibility in our households to understand, to teach and to embody the tradition, the practice and the necessity of Christian worship," he said.

"Our hope is that with this grant we will be able to better equip our younger church family members to begin understanding that worship is not something we have to do, but that it is part of who we are."

This is the 11th year of the CICW program. The institute will award almost \$500,000 to support a variety of worship renewal projects in 40 churches and organizations across North America this year.

"These projects have much to teach us about how prayerful, resourceful leaders in a remarkable variety of contexts are thinking about the needs of the church and opportunities for ministry," says CICW Director



Wakefield UMC is using the grant to implement a year-long program exploring the meaning of worship.

John Witvliet. "We are eager to learn from them."

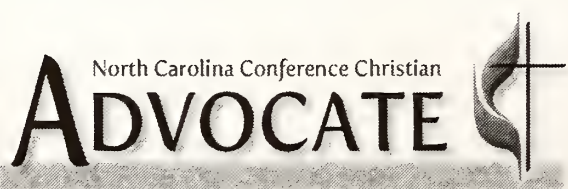
The Worship Renewal Grants Program is supported by Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. which focuses on community development, education, and religion.

For additional information, contact the Rev. Judi New, Wakefield UMC Family Pastor, by phone (919) 827-0670, x802 or by email: jnew@wakefieldumc.org.

Help the new pastor connect to the community

- 46. Provide local media with information about the new pastor.
- 47. Provide a list of hospitals, nursing homes, and community service agencies.
- 48. Introduce your new pastor to other clergy in the community. Provide information on any ecumenical activities or associations.
- 49. Introduce the new pastor to public and community leaders.
- 50. Ask church members in civic clubs to take the new pastor to one of their meetings.

* Dr. Robert Crossman, Minister of New Church Starts and Congregational Advancement for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, is the primary author of this document. The Lewis Center staff and others provided input, suggestions, and editorial assistance. (Reprinted with the permission of the Lewis Center.)



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

a Future with HOPE *Living for Jesus*

North Carolina Annual Conference 2010

Adjustments made to shorten AC schedule

By Bill Norton *

When the 2010 North Carolina Annual Conference meets June 10-12 in the Greenville Convention Center under the theme "A Future with Hope...Living for Jesus," the gathering will meet one day less than last year. When conference members requested the reduction in meeting days, the hope was a reduction in cost, but it also meant an adjustment was needed in the conference agenda.

Reducing Expenses

Conference members should have a 30% reduction in the expenses for room and meals, said Carol Goehring, executive director of conference connectional ministries and church revitalization.

"The actual cost for conducting the conference remains about the same because the convention center is rented for a week for setup of the stage, tables and chairs and audio visual needs," said the Rev. Jerry Bryan, conference secretary, "but some other savings are being realized."

The additional savings has been realized by placing all meeting-related materials on the conference website and not printing and mailing items to members. "This resulted in a savings of almost \$30,000. Postage alone for the 2009 conference was \$12,000," Bryan said.

Modified Agenda

A major question before the Conference Program Planning Committee since the last conference was how to include worship and required business with fewer days. The answer was combining several worship services, restricting the number of reports not requiring a vote, and scheduling all awards for an evening program.

The conference will begin with a combined Service of Holy Communion and All Saints Celebration at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 10. It will conclude with combined services for ordination and commissioning, passing of the mantle service, fixing of appointments and sending forth

on Saturday, June 12, beginning at 9:30 a.m. All services are in the Greenville Convention Center.

The ministry of 27 Saints who have died since the last conference will be celebrated as part of the opening service of Holy Communion.

Bishop Al Gwinn will serve as the worship leader and will preside during the conference. Richard Hays, interim dean of Duke Divinity School, will be the guest preacher for the opening service.

The business of the conference will begin following the singing of the hymn "And Are We Yet Alive." Since the early days of The Methodist Church, currently The United Methodist Church, the hymn written by Charles Wesley has been used to open annual conferences.

Financial Presentation

In addition to the organization of the conference, welcome, and nominations presentation, an overview of the financial status in the conference and how funding requests impact the budget and ultimately the local church will be presented.

During previous years, the proposed budget by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration was presented and then voted on two days later. Other funding requests, such as pensions, insurance, and equitable compensation, were presented on different days. For this year, the budget and all funding requests will be presented on Thursday afternoon.

Awards, including Saints of God, Denman, Key Taylor, and others will be presented Thursday evening, in a program beginning at 7:30 p.m. Following the awards, Bishop Gwinn will deliver the State of the Church address.

At 7:30 a.m. on Friday and Saturday an early morning service of communion will be held in the Hilton Ballroom B.

During the Friday morning session, presentations will be made by the Board of Ordained Ministry, recognition of first time local pastors, Academy for Leadership, Clergy Health Initiative, report by the stat-

istician, and resolutions. Conference members will vote on seven resolutions (see page 20-21 for details).

The afternoon session will begin with an update on the new conference headquarters in Garner and a presentation by the Board of Institutions. A Celebration of the Laity will begin at 3 p.m. It will be followed with a vote on nominations, other business of the conference, and a vote on the site for the conference to meet in 2011.

Three locations for the 2011 conference will be presented and discussed: Wilmington, Fayetteville, and Raleigh. The scheduled meeting time in 2011 is not available in Greenville, however, the location is included for 2012. (See page 18 for details.)

Celebration & Ordination

A Laity Celebration will be held Friday evening, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The 30-voice African Children's Choir will open the program. Dr. Tom Morris, described as one of the most active philosophers in the world, will be the speaker. He is the author of 12 books and often is a commentator on national news programs. Morris is a member of Wrightsville UMC. (See page 17 for more information.)

The final conference session will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday with the ordination and commissioning

service, the passing of the mantle, and the fixing of appointments.

Candidates for Commissioning as Provisional Members includes one on the deacon track and nine on the elder track. Candidates for Ordination include two as deacons in full connection and 21 as elders in full connection.

During the closing of conference, members will sing "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

Service Projects

Five opportunities for volunteer service will be available for lay and clergy members. An opportunity to package food products will be available Thursday between 5 - 7:30 p.m. in Hilton Ballroom B.

Four other opportunities will be available Saturday after conference ends, between 1-4 p.m. They include demolishing a kitchen at the Wesley Foundation, painting and working on ramps for handicapped accessibility.

Completed volunteer registration forms provided at conference should be turned in at the conference registration desk. Registration is also available on the Internet at nccmc.org. (See page 6 for details.)

* Bill Norton is Advocate editor, and conference director of Communications.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE RESOURCES:

Living for Jesus - Service Projects	6
Conference Information, Assistance, FAQ	7
Rules, Nominations, Policy for Meetings	8
Financial Overview	9
<i>Council on Finance & Administration Reports:</i>	
Proposed 2012 Budget	10
Local Church Finance Minimum Standards	11
District Superintendent Salaries	11
Board of Pensions: Report B	12-15
Equitable Compensation	16
Guest Speakers, African Children's Choir	17
Site Proposals for Annual Conference 2011	18
Board of Trustees Report	18
Frequently Asked Questions: Finance & Pensions	19
Proposed Resolutions	20-21
Results of Vote on Constitutional Amendments	22

Living for Jesus - Service Projects During Annual Conference

By Carol Goehring *

If we are truly "living for Jesus," we give of ourselves for the people Jesus loves. If we are "living for Jesus," we serve the lost and work with the poor.

During and after Annual Conference, June 10-12 in Greenville, lay and clergy conference members have five opportunities to participate in one or more mission projects:

Project 1: On Thursday evening, during the dinner break, Stop Hunger Now will guide food packaging in Ballroom B in the Hilton Hotel, adjacent to the Convention Center. The dehydrated food product is ready for packaging and the goal is 20,000 meals packaged between 5 - 7:30

p.m. Volunteers are asked to consider fasting and contribute the cost of the missed meal for shipping the packaged food abroad.

At the close of the business session of the Annual Conference, four opportunities await volunteer assistance on Saturday 1-4 p.m.

Two projects are at the Wesley Foundation at East Carolina University, and two projects involve handicap access ramps.

The Wesley Foundation, one of the campus ministries with connection to the NC Conference, needs volunteers for demolition and painting projects.

Project 2: Demolition of the Wesley Foundation kitchen, built in the 1950's. Plans for the renovation

are in hand and will be completed over the summer. Volunteer support for the demolition will reduce costs considerably. Bring work gloves, a crowbar and other tools.

Project 3: Also at the Wesley Foundation, some of the rooms that students occupy during the academic year need painting. Bring work gloves. All other supplies will be provided.

Directions to the Wesley Foundation at ECU: from the Convention Center, exit the parking lot onto Greenville Boulevard and turn right. Go to Evans Street and turn left. Continue on Evans to Fifth Street in downtown Greenville and turn right. The Wesley Foundation is on the left at 501 E. Fifth Street. Parking is available on the street

or behind the Center.

Projects 4 & 5: Two projects involving ramps for handicap accessibility need volunteer assistance. The ramps are built and volunteers will hammer in galvanized nails to supplement the nails that were used previously in error. Nails and safety glasses will be provided, as well as, a few hammers and screw guns. Bring work gloves and a hammer.

One project site is at 1104 East 10th Street. Directions from the Convention Center: Turn right from the Convention Center parking lot onto Greenville Blvd and go 2.1 miles, passing Greenville Mall on the right. At Elm St., turn right and go .9 miles. Turn right onto 10th St. and find 1104 the second house on the right. Parking may be limited.

The second project site is 2706 Sunset Street. Directions from the Convention Center: Turn left from the Convention Center lot onto Greenville Boulevard and go .6 miles. Turn sharp right onto Memorial Blvd (Hwy 11) and continue for 1/3 miles. Turn right onto Pine Street and go one block. Turn right onto Sunset.

Thank you for graciously extending radical hospitality to our neighbors in Greenville. Your efforts will convey the love of Jesus Christ and allow us to be the Body of Christ in service.

To help those planning these project, please return the completed volunteer registration form provided at conference. These should be turned in at the conference registration desk. Registration is also available on the Internet at nccumc.org.

* Carol Goehring is conference executive director of connectional ministries and church revitalization.

THANK YOU

North Carolina ANNUAL CONFERENCE

for your support of churchwide Special Sundays with offering in 2009

Human Relations Day
One Great Hour of Sharing
Native American Ministries Sunday
Peace With Justice Sunday
United Methodist Student Day
World Communion Sunday
Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn Jr.

Lindsey Davis

Bishop Lindsey Davis
President, General Council on
Finance and Administration

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world..."

- Romans 1:8



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Annual Conference information and assistance

Nametags/Lanyards

All nametags are white with a colored lanyard. Please wear your name tag and lanyard at all times.

Upon leaving Annual Conference, please turn in your lanyard at the Registration Desk or designated boxes located at the Exit doors when you leave Annual Conference.

The lanyard colors indicate the following and assist the tellers with counting any necessary votes that are taken.

BLUE: Lay Members, At Large Members - Vote on all deliberations/measures other than clerical license, ordination, and reception, except those who are lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, See ¶602.6.

BLUE: Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers - As lay members of the Conference, they have same voting rights as lay members.

RED: Clerical Members (Deacons/Elders) in Full Connection - Vote on all matters of the Annual Conference other than in election of lay delegates to SEJ and General Conferences, See ¶602.1a.

GREEN: Associate/Probationary Members, Part Time/Full Time Local Pastors - Vote on all matters to include election of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences but not constitutional amendments, ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, See ¶602.1b, c, d.

YELLOW: Student Pastors, Interim Supplies, Members of Other Conferences, Affiliates - These have no vote and have no voice unless granted on the floor of the Conference, except for Student Pastors, who have a voice but no vote. See ¶341.7.

BLACK: All staff available for your assistance will be wearing black lanyards. Staff have no vote and have no voice unless granted on the floor of the Conference.

Telephones

The phone number of the Registration area at the Greenville Convention Center is (252) 355-6478 and will be in service from June 8 - June 12, 2010.

Pay telephones are also available in the Greenville Convention Center.

Telephone service is available in each East Carolina University dorm room if you bring your own telephone. Only local calls are free. You must use a calling card or credit card to make long distance phone calls from your dorm room.

Special Assistance

If you require medical attention during the week of Annual Conference, please report to the Registration Area for

assistance. Nurses from throughout the Conference will be on-site to assist you.

Hearing Assistance - If a request was made by June 1, an assisted listening system will be available at the Registration Tables for use during Annual Conference.

Translation - Sign language interpretation and Spanish language translation services are offered to those who made a request by June 1.

Offerings

The first offering will be received on Thursday morning for the Central Conference Pension Initiative. The second offering will be received on Thursday evening for Nothing But Nets. The third offering will be received on Friday evening for Laity Ministries.

Music & Flowers

Appreciation is extended to the NC Conference Chapter of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Worship, Music and Other Arts for the music ministry at the Annual Conference.

The flowers are given on behalf of the Burlington District in honor of members on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and District Committees on Ministry for their devoted and essential service to the health and future of the NC Conference.

By Christine Dodson *

Q: How do I make a motion at annual conference?

A: The procedure for making a motion at annual conference can be found in the Annual Conference rules in section I, paragraph 2. The Conference Rules can be found online at nccumc.org under Events, Annual Conference, Rules for 2010.

Q: Who makes the proposals for rules changes for the conference?

A: The Rules Committee evaluates the rules for conference and proposes any changes in the rules report. These changes are considered by annual conference and voted on prior to the beginning of any other business at annual conference. This vote will be as soon as conference begins on Thursday, June 10 around 2:00p.m. (See page 8 for more.)

Q: What is the rationale behind having the ordination service on Saturday?

A: The ordination service is a significant event in the life of our covenant community. Allowing adequate time and encouraging the participation of family and friends of the ordinands always has been important in our tradition as a Conference. This year,

with the shorter Conference, it was thought that the Commissioning, Ordination and Sending Forth of our clergy (with the reading of appointments) could be combined effectively. In this service, we are reminded that God calls and sets apart some for ministry as Deacons or Elders, and others are called, equipped and empowered by the Spirit to serve as Lay members of the church. We all are sent forth in the name of Jesus Christ! As the Conference agenda has been prepared, this service now is the only item on Saturday, giving it prominence for us all.

Q: Has there been a study done of how much it costs to have a separate clergy executive session? Why was the clergy executive session done separately?

A: The separate clergy executive session was tried this year following a survey of clergy all across the North Carolina Conference. We do not yet have an estimate of costs, although it would seem to be a savings to hold the executive session separately this year.

With the Conference convening at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 10, the executive session could not easily be scheduled earlier that day. Holding the executive session on Wednesday would require many of our clergy to be in Greenville for an extra night.

If lay members are dependent on the pastor for transportation or if sharing the ride is a matter of stewardship, the Wednesday option creates additional costs for Conference members. In addition, the May 14 executive session was envisioned as a time of fellowship, the business was not rushed, and colleagues had time to visit with one another. Evaluation of this practice will be considered before the schedule is prepared for 2011.

Q: What special offerings will be received?

A: At the opening worship, an offering is designated for the Central Conference Pension Initiative. Lay and clergy members will have an opportunity to present gifts and/or pledges at the altar. On Thursday evening, an offering will be received for Nothing But Nets. This ministry is dedicated to the eradication of Malaria. Treated nets cost \$10/each and have shown promise for greatly reducing the incidence of malaria. We can do great things for Global Health. The third offering will be on Friday evening and will support conference Lay Ministries.

* Christine Dodson is conference treasurer.

Meal Options

A concession stand in the Convention Center will be open Thursday & Friday 8am-5pm. Saturday it will be open 8-pam. Light breakfast items, snacks, and beverages are offered. Box lunches will be available in the Hilton Hotel near the location of the Cokesbury Bookstore.

Special Meals

Thursday, June 10

Retiree Luncheon and Recognition 12 noon; Greenville Hilton,

NCC Clergywomen; 12 noon; Greenville Hilton

Evangelical Fellowship, Covenant UMC, 4000 Corey Road, Winterville; 12 noon

Methodist University Annual dinner for alumni, ministers, friends; 5:30 p.m.; Jarvis Memorial UMC; 510 S. Washington Street • Greenville; Tel: 252-752-3101; (Shuttle service provided in front of the Convention Center)

United Methodist Retirement Homes Pig Pickin'; Cypress Glen Retirement Community in Greenville; 100 Hickory Street, Greenville; 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. No charge. Shuttles available beginning at 5 p.m.

Friday, June 11

Duke Divinity School Alumni; Greenville Hilton; 12 noon, West Wing rooms 2 & 3

Extension Ministry; 12 noon; Greenville Hilton, Ballrooms C-D

United Methodist Men; 12 noon; St. James UMC

Methodist Federation for Social Action/Reconciling United Methodist and Friends are co-hosting a pizza lunch; City Hotel and Bistro; 12 noon; Worship and communion will also be held.

Asbury Seminary Alumni; Covenant UMC, 4000 Corey Road, Winterville; 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

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Rules of Order: *Proposed Changes*

Please note: Listed below are only those sections of the Rules of Order which require a vote due to proposed changes.

SECTION I:

Rules of Order and Procedure

2. Motions, Amendments, Reports and Resolutions

~~F. Any report, recommendation, resolution, or motion requiring funding beyond the Annual Conference budget as presented by the Council on Finance and Administration shall be submitted in writing to the Conference Secretary with copies for all the lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference. Any such report, recommendation, resolution, or motion shall be presented at the annual conference* on one day and considered the next day. No such report, recommendation, resolution, or motion shall be distributed later than the second night of the annual conference. All such reports, recommendations, resolutions, or motions shall be referred to the Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration.~~

F. Any report, recommendation, resolution or motion affecting the apportionments of local congregations, including the Annual Conference* budget as proposed by the Council on Finance and Administration shall be presented at least one day prior to the day scheduled by the Annual

5. Election of Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences

~~A. All votes shall be cast using the official ballot cards authorized by the Annual Conference. Voting for all lay and clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be by secret ballot.~~

A. In the Annual Conference* prior to the election of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference the Annual Conference Rules Committee shall propose the manner of election to be approved by Annual Conference.*

~~B. Prior to the convening of any annual conference* that will elect delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, the Conference Secretary will publish eligibility requirements and voting procedures for election of delegates.~~

~~C. Different colored ballot cards will be provided for lay and clergy members.~~

~~D. The names of persons receiving less than ten (10) votes shall not be reported to the Conference.~~

Conference Planning Committee for consideration of the final Council on Finance and Administration report.

~~E. Five alternates to Jurisdictional Conference shall be elected.~~

~~F. Invalid ballot cards~~

~~1) Each round of balloting shall be numbered consecutively, and the chair shall announce the number of the ballot. Only ballot cards with the proper number affixed shall be valid.~~

~~2) Defaced ballot cards will be considered invalid. If a member defaces a ballot card, it may be exchanged for an undamaged one at the Conference Secretary's desk.~~

~~3) An electronic ballot card will be considered invalid if it is not marked clearly and darkly with a number 2 pencil or black pen.~~

~~4) A ballot card will be considered invalid if it has more or less than the number of votes permitted on that particular ballot.~~

~~5) A ballot card will be considered invalid if it indicates a vote for a person already elected.~~

~~6) A ballot card will be considered invalid if it indicates a vote for someone not eligible.~~

~~7) A ballot card will be considered invalid if it shows that a member has voted more than once on the same ballot card for one candidate.~~

Nominations for 2010-2011 Conference Leadership

Please note: Listed below are only those individuals nominated to fill a vacancy. The complete listing of Conference committees and boards is located in the 2009 Journal. Visit <http://journal.nccmc.org/journal2009.html> and select Section 2 - Conference Organization.

Missions /Missions, Inc.

BU	2010	Jimmy Wooten
GR	2010	Sue Harrison
RO	2010	Roberta Foster
WI	2010	Edith Gleaves

Disaster Response District Coordinators

DU	Gregg Allen Presnal
FA	Melinda Ivey
SA	Suzanne Crutchfield Cobb

Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries

2010	Charles Barrow
2010	Heather Rodriques

Refugee & Immigration

2010	Lawrence Bowden
2010	Patrice Cheasty Miller

Board of Institutions

2010	Warren McDonald
------	-----------------

Evangelism

2010	Marty Cauley
2010	Bobby L. Herring
2010	Mary Frances McClure

New Faith Communities

2008	James Henderson
------	-----------------

Worship

2010	Nanette deAndrade
2010	John M. McAllister
2010	David Malcolm

Multicultural Ministries

2010	Yesenia Palomino
------	------------------

At Large: 2010 Jennifer Morgan Chavis

Hispanic/Latino

2010	Jessie Larkins
2010	Edith Salazar
2010	Jose Luis Villasenor

Strengthening the Black Church

2010	Leslie Mills
2010	Michael Griffin

Native American Ministry

2010	Jennifer Morgan Chavis
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Asian Ministry

2010	Mila S. Lambert
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Monitoring & Accountability

BU	2010	Jane Johnson
EC	2010	Julia Webb-Bowden

Conference Staff Relations

2010	Sue Guy
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Council on Finance and Administration

2010	Gloria Winston Harris
2010	William Blount
2010	Rex M. Scott
2010	David M. Peele

Pensions & Past Service Liability

2010	Sylvia Harriss
2010	Cashar Evans
2010	Kathy Bradley

Insurance

2010	Vonda Jones-Hudson (Wellness Committee)
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Trustees

2010	Ferrell Blount
2010	Robert Joyce
2010	Laura Mitchell

Wesley Foundation Board at UNC Chapel Hill

Sandy Scarlett	Mary Ann Kimball
Woody Claris	Jim Kocher
Robbie Dircks	Celie Richardson
Marguerite Hutchins	

New conference Policy for Meetings to be presented

A conference Policy for Meetings will be presented for adoption by conference members.

Highlights of the policy are:

1. Responsibility for attendance and stewardship for committee members and officers, with 100% attendance expected at meetings.
2. If an absence cannot be avoided, then notification before the meeting is to be sent to the staff liaison.
3. Three excused absences, with advance notification, are permitted during the term of office, typically four years.
4. After three excused or two unexcused absences, the executive committee of the board, committee, or team will review the circumstances and determine if the member will continue to serve.
5. Members can serve on the same committee or board for no more than eight years.

Each board or committee meets between two to four times per year and sometimes more frequently. Meetings are often scheduled from 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. during the work week.

Travel reimbursement is provided. Members can request the volunteer rate of 14 cents a mile or the IRS rate of 50 cents per mile. Reimbursement should be requested the day of the meeting on a specified form.

If a group chair or CCT team leader is not willing or able to serve, a designated member, possibly the vice chair, may attend. The preference is for the person to be assigned for the quadrennium or four years.

Financial overview to relate line items to budget total

On Thursday afternoon at Annual Conference, a new financial overview presentation is scheduled.

Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, will begin this overview by sharing facts and statistics for the North Carolina Conference and The United Methodist Church as a whole that have been the basis for many discussions over the last year.

For example, a review will be presented of changes in membership, pension plan funding levels, worship attendance and more. This broad overview is intended to begin a discussion of how several reports presented each year at annual conference work together in affecting the overall financial picture of The United Methodist Church in North Carolina.

Below is a brief summary Dodson wrote to give information on items that will be included in the overview.

The full reports with changes and additions are located on the annual conference section of the conference website, nccumc.org.

Specific portions of any reports requiring a vote are printed in this edition of the *Advocate* on the page numbers noted below.

Council on Finance and Administration (CFA)

The report of CFA provides the overall financial policies of the conference including the Annual Conference budget, apportionment formula, and financial guidelines.

The first section of the report makes recommendation of the annual conference budget for 2012. The budget being recommended was developed through a year long process whereby CFA set a limit on the total amount of the budget and the Conference Connectional Table worked to prioritize the ministries within that total.

The 2012 budget recommended by CFA is a total of \$20,345,625 for a 0.34% increase over the 2011 budget. The full 2010 budget as recommended by CFA is on page 10.

Section II.a. of the CFA report provides the actual expenses of the annual conference paid through the Annual Conference budget in 2009. The 2010 operating budget is provided in Section II.b. and changes to the reserves of the Annual Conference are provided in Section II.c.

Section III lists the overall financial policies of the annual conference including the formula for calculating apportionments. There is no change to the apportionment formula being recommended in the report.

Section IV of the report is a new section that provides minimum

standards for financial internal controls at the local church level. CFA has been sensitive to the requests for these standards from local churches and is working to equip local churches through clear statement of best practices in a local church setting. (This section is printed on page 11 and available online.)

Section VI of the CFA report has changed since last year in that it makes a recommendation for the 2011 salary level for district superintendents. (See page 11 for details.)

The annual conference policy has been that the salary be set at the average of the top 25 salaries and non-vouchered cash allowances for local church appointments in the conference. This average produces a salary of \$101,994 for 2011 which represents a 1.6% increase over the 2010 salary.

Funding for district superintendent salaries is provided through annual conference apportionments in the Stewardship Team under the District Superintendent Salary and Benefits budget line.

Board of Pension

The first section of the Board of Pension report provides the list of names of current year retirees. The retirees will be recognized on Thursday afternoon of Annual Conference as conference comes back together at 2 p.m. after the morning opening worship service.

Report B of the Board of Pension report (located on pages 12-15) provides the details of the various supplements of the pension benefit plans.

The first report listed is the funding plan for the pre-1982 pension benefits. This funding plan gives the details of the liability to the annual conference associated with these benefits and sets the rate [the per service year rate (PSR)] at which benefits will be paid under this plan.

The recommendation for the PSR for 2011 is an increase of 2.1% over the 2010 rate. This would set the 2011 PSR at \$639. This PSR results in a liability for future payment of these benefits of \$51,397,193 if we assume future increases of 5% in the PSR as included in the original 1991 funding plan. Of that amount, almost \$35 million has been raised for an overall funded status of about 67%.

The details of this funded status and of the projection for project raising the remaining funds are provided in Report B. This plan is being funded through apportionment payments on the Past Service Liability apportionment line. The recommendation

for this apportionment is provided in the budget being proposed to Annual Conference for 2012 in the Council on Finance and Administration report.

Changes in the number of pastors receiving benefits from this plan, the benefits paid through this plan and earnings on the funding already raised impact the levels of the Past Service Liability apportionment in the budget.

Report C of the Board of Pension report is the housing exclusion allowance that must be approved by annual conference each year in order for retired clergy receiving pension benefits to exclude the income from taxable income on their individual tax returns.

Report D of the Board of Pension report is the plan document for the Ministers' Transition Fund (MTF). The change to this document in 2010 is to change the contribution due for those participants in extension ministries or applicable leave statuses to equal the same percentage for pastors in local church appointments.

The Annual Conference removed the conference contribution to the MTF through the annual conference budget in 2009. This change removes the requirement for the same employer contribution for the other appointment statuses.

Insurance Committee

This report sets the policies and eligibility for health and life insurance benefits for clergy and lay employees within the Conference. The committee recommends no change in eligibility, benefits or rates for the 2011 insurance year. This is the seventh year that the active plan premiums have remained constant.

This has been a welcomed relief during the difficult economic times but is a relief that cannot be sustained permanently with rising health care costs. The insurance committee does project that an increase in rates will be prudent for the 2012 premiums.

Commission on Equitable Compensation

The Commission on Equitable Compensation's report (see page 16) sets the policies for minimum salary levels for full-time and student appointments as well as the policies for equitable compensation grants to churches.

Section I of the report provides that the committee recommends no change to the minimum salary levels or structure for full-time and student appointments for 2011.

Section II makes some changes

to the policies around eligibility for churches to apply for grants from the Commission on Equitable Compensation budget line.

The changes to the policies are noted in the full text of the report and, in general, loosen some of the restriction on which churches are eligible for grant funding.

This funding is provided through the Equitable Compensation budget line under the Stewardship Team in the budget being proposed to annual conference.

The committee uses the eligibility policies to help determine who receives grants and how much those grants can be. The grants are used by churches to assist in funding the salary, utilities and travel for clergy when a church is unable to fund these items without this support.

Joint Committee on Incapacity (JCI)

The report of the JCI provides listing and recommendation for the clergy members of annual conference who are currently on, applying for or coming off of the incapacity leave status. The eligibility guidelines and benefits offered to those on incapacity leave are defined in this report. The committee recommends no change in eligibility for benefits.

A change is recommended in Section II that would require those on incapacity leave to contribute to the cost of health insurance premiums at the minimum level required by retirees (currently \$10 per month).

The funding for the benefits offered through the JCI report is provided in through apportionment funding in the Stewardship Team budget under the Joint Committee on Incapacity budget line.

Discussion and Voting on Financial Reports

After review of these reports with potential financial implication to the annual conference, the conference members will be asked to vote on each report individually.

Discussion of each report will be allowed prior to vote so that the relationship between the reports and the budget (such as for the Past Service Liability apportionment or the various budget lines mentioned above) or funding directly through the local church (such as for minimum salary and insurance plan premiums) can be considered.

The intention is that all financial information can be discussed and considered together to help bring the overall financial impact of these votes to the forefront of discussion.

CFA: Proposed 2012 Budget

To be raised January 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011

Row #	Ministry Teams	Shortfall for 2009	Approved Request 2008 Raised 2009 for 2010	UNAUDITED Actual Raised 2009 for 2010	Shortfall for 2010	Approved Request 2009 Raised 2010 for 2011	Requested Request 2010 Raised 2011 for 2012	Increase (Decrease)	0.34% % Increase (Decr)	% of Total Apport
1	** World Service	\$92,759	\$1,964,827	\$1,827,686	\$137,141	\$1,976,647	\$2,013,941	\$37,294	1.89%	9.90%
	<i>Outreach Ministry Team</i>									
2	Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries	536	11,730	10,911	819	11,400	11,400	-	0.00%	0.06%
3	Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries	1,372	30,000	27,906	2,094	30,000	30,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
4	Disaster Response	423	10,000	9,302	698	16,200	5,000	(11,200)	-69.14%	0.02%
5	Methodist Home for Children	8,687	190,000	176,738	13,262	190,000	200,000	10,000	5.26%	0.98%
6	Methodist Retirement Homes	9,144	200,000	186,040	13,960	200,000	200,000	-	0.00%	0.98%
7	Golden Cross Fund	686	15,050	14,000	1,050	15,050	15,050	-	0.00%	0.07%
8	Missions and Outreach	21,488	459,600	427,521	32,079	492,220	492,220	-	0.00%	2.42%
9	Refugee & Immigration	-	11,000	10,232	768	11,000	16,000	5,000	45.45%	0.08%
10	Board of Institutions	23	500	465	35	500	500	-	0.00%	0.00%
11	Disability Concerns	160	3,500	3,256	244	4,700	2,000	(2,700)	-57.45%	0.01%
	Subtotal - Outreach Ministry Team	\$42,519	\$931,380	\$866,371	\$65,009	\$971,070	\$972,170	\$1,100	0.11%	4.78%
	<i>Christian Formation Team</i>									
12	Evangelism	\$2,057	\$45,000	\$41,859	\$3,141	\$99,955	\$99,955	\$0	0.00%	0.49%
13	Church & Society	457	8,500	7,907	593	12,600	15,000	2,400	19.05%	0.07%
14	Spiritual Life	-	6,500	6,046	454	12,800	13,000	200	1.56%	0.06%
15	Worship	183	4,000	3,721	279	5,200	5,200	-	0.00%	0.03%
16	Higher Education and Campus Ministries	229	5,000	4,651	349	7,000	7,000	-	0.00%	0.03%
17	** College Chaplaincy Support Fund	12,573	275,000	255,806	19,194	275,000	275,000	-	0.00%	1.35%
18	College Chaplaincy Support - Reserve	-	68,750	63,951	4,799	68,750	68,750	-	0.00%	0.34%
19	Campus Ministry	21,717	475,000	441,846	33,154	501,400	501,000	(400)	-0.08%	2.46%
20	Youth Ministry	1,600	54,270	50,482	3,788	60,300	60,300	-	0.00%	0.30%
21	Young Adults	-	4,050	3,767	283	4,050	4,050	-	0.00%	0.02%
22	Children's Ministries	914	17,505	16,283	1,222	19,450	19,450	-	0.00%	0.10%
23	Older Adults	-	6,000	5,581	419	6,000	6,000	-	0.00%	0.03%
24	Education and Nurture	411	2,250	2,093	157	3,200	3,200	-	0.00%	0.02%
25	Camp & Retreat Min Inc.	12,573	275,000	255,806	19,194	275,000	275,000	-	0.00%	1.35%
26	Emerging Church Support	32,805	618,863	575,668	43,195	823,419	854,200	30,781	3.74%	4.20%
27	New Faith Communities Sal & Ben	9,610	210,203	195,631	14,672	226,578	226,578	-	0.00%	1.11%
28	New Faith Communities Office	2,692	58,877	54,767	4,110	63,000	64,200	1,200	1.90%	0.32%
29	Archives & History	350	6,885	6,404	481	7,650	7,650	-	0.00%	0.04%
30	Conference Media Center	-	5,000	4,651	349	6,300	6,300	-	0.00%	0.03%
	Subtotal - Christian Formation Team	\$98,173	\$2,146,653	\$1,996,821	\$149,832	\$2,477,652	\$2,511,833	\$34,181	1.38%	12.35%
	<i>Leadership Team</i>									
31	Multicultural Ministries Team	\$726	\$8,620	\$8,018	\$602	\$18,450	\$8,000	(\$10,450)	-56.64%	0.04%
32	Multicultural Ministries Grants	2,286	60,000	46,610	3,490	50,000	50,000	-	0.00%	0.25%
33	Multicultural Ministries Program	4,236	91,950	85,632	6,418	112,620	135,770	23,150	20.56%	0.67%
34	Hispanic/Latino Ministries Office	627	12,700	11,814	886	12,700	-	(12,700)	-100.00%	0.00%
35	Monitoring & Accountability	169	3,700	3,442	258	3,700	4,950	1,250	33.78%	0.02%
36	** Ministerial Education Fund	30,147	679,565	632,133	47,432	676,660	680,358	3,698	0.55%	3.34%
37	Board of Ordained / Diaconal Ministry	7,704	176,210	163,911	12,299	190,700	195,500	4,800	2.52%	0.96%
38	BODM: Sexual Ethics Programs	832	21,875	20,348	1,527	21,875	18,000	(3,875)	-17.71%	0.09%
39	Seminary Visitation	91	2,000	1,860	140	2,000	4,000	2,000	100.00%	0.02%
40	Bishop's Days Apart	366	8,000	7,442	668	8,000	8,000	-	0.00%	0.04%
41	Laity	1,129	27,400	25,488	1,912	28,000	28,000	-	0.00%	0.14%
42	Episcopacy	55	1,200	1,116	84	1,200	1,200	-	0.00%	0.01%
43	District Supt. Fund: Salaries & Pen. Ben.	68,446	1,497,073	1,392,580	104,493	1,549,470	1,514,035	(35,435)	-2.29%	7.44%
44	District Supt. Fund: Travel	4,663	104,000	96,741	7,259	104,000	104,000	-	0.00%	0.61%
45	Dist. Supt. Fund: Cabinet Exp.	1,686	37,621	34,995	2,626	40,000	40,000	-	0.00%	0.20%
46	Cabinet Discretionary Fund	229	5,000	4,651	349	5,000	5,000	-	0.00%	0.02%
47	Bishop's Discretionary Fund	91	2,000	1,860	140	2,000	2,000	-	0.00%	0.01%
48	Dir Ministerial Relations-Sal & Benefits	13,608	332,677	309,457	23,220	343,459	343,459	-	0.00%	1.69%
49	Dir Ministerial Relations-Office	908	20,446	19,019	1,427	24,000	24,500	500	2.08%	0.12%
50	Christian Unity	320	7,000	6,511	489	7,000	7,000	-	0.00%	0.03%
51	NC Council of Churches	823	18,000	16,744	1,256	18,000	18,000	-	0.00%	0.09%
52	Office of the Bishop	1,379	30,881	28,726	2,155	31,000	31,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
53	Effective Ministry Program	1,143	25,000	23,255	1,745	25,000	25,000	-	0.00%	0.12%
54	Conference Staff Relations Comm	59	1,300	1,209	91	1,300	1,300	-	0.00%	0.01%
56	Nominations	23	600	466	35	1,000	2,000	1,000	100.00%	0.01%
56	CM Task Forces	-	-	-	-	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0.00%
	Subtotal - Leadership Team	\$151,260	\$3,164,718	\$2,943,827	\$220,891	\$3,277,134	\$3,251,072	(\$26,062)	-0.80%	15.98%
	<i>Stewardship Team</i>									
66	Stewardship	\$667	\$12,400	\$11,535	\$866	\$13,250	\$13,250	\$0	0.00%	0.07%
57	Annual Conf. Expense	6,858	160,000	148,832	11,168	178,000	200,000	22,000	12.36%	0.98%
58	Annual Conf. Registrar Sal & Ben	183	4,000	3,721	279	4,000	4,000	-	0.00%	0.02%
59	Conf. Secretary's Office	823	18,000	16,744	1,256	18,500	19,000	500	2.70%	0.09%
60	Conf. Secretary's Office Sal & Ben	4,020	88,000	81,858	6,142	91,080	91,080	-	0.00%	0.45%
61	Conference Journal/Printing	1,737	30,000	27,906	2,094	40,000	40,000	-	0.00%	0.20%
62	Communications	4,007	85,000	79,067	5,933	90,000	88,500	(1,500)	-1.67%	0.43%
63	Publications: NC Conference Advocate	2,867	60,100	55,905	4,195	57,700	30,000	(27,700)	-48.01%	0.15%
64	** General Administration	8,166	218,936	203,655	15,281	214,172	219,782	5,610	2.61%	1.08%
65	** SEJ Mission & Ministry	6,841	153,388	142,682	10,706	153,388	153,388	-	0.00%	0.75%
66	Conf. Treasurer's Office Sal & Ben	28,728	650,343	604,950	45,393	673,106	673,105	(1)	0.00%	3.31%
67	Conf. Treasurer's Office	7,512	227,525	211,644	16,881	217,860	217,860	-	0.00%	1.07%
68	Treasurer Bonding & Insurance	343	8,300	7,721	579	10,790	10,790	-	0.00%	0.05%
69	Information Management Office	3,250	71,710	66,705	5,005	74,300	74,300	-	0.00%	0.37%
70	Information Management Sal & Ben	8,660	196,038	182,366	13,682	202,899	202,899	(0)	0.00%	1.00%
71	Conf. Board of Trustees	73	1,600	1,488	112	1,750	1,750	-	0.00%	0.01%
72	Contingency Fund	686	15,000	13,953	1,047	15,000	15,000	-	0.00%	0.07%
73	** Meth. Bldg. Operating Fund	7,315	170,000	158,134	11,866	175,000	175,000	-	0.00%	0.86%
74	** Meth. Bldg. Capital Fund	9,144	200,000	186,040	13,960	200,000	200,000	-	0.00%	0.98%
75	Episcopal Residence	457	15,000	13,953	1,047	15,000	15,000	-	0.00%	0.07%
76	Staff Housing	2,355	53,500	49,766	3,734	110,671	111,047	376	0.34%	0.55%
77	Legal Counsel	914	20,000	18,604	1,396	20,000	20,000	-	0.00%	0.10%
78	Equitable Compensation	6,716	125,000	116,275	8,725	125,000	125,000	-	0.00%	0.61%
79	Minister's Moving Expense	5,029	185,000	172,087	12,913	185,000	185,000	-	0.00%	0.91%
80	Joint Comm. on Incapacity	23,043	416,000	386,964	29,036	461,058	461,058	-	0.00%	2.27%
81	Conf. Claimants -Retiree Insurance	123,444	2,700,000	2,511,545	188,455	2,700,000	2,700,000	-	0.00%	13.27%
82	In-coming WATS	178	3,900	3,628	272	4,200	4,200	-	0.00%	0.02%
83	General and Jurisdictional Conference	1,372	53,000	49,301	3,699	30,000	30,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
84	CCM Office Meetings & Programs	5,235	116,750	108,601	8,149	120,250	120,250	-	0.00%	0.59%
86	CCM Staff Salaries and Benefits	48,772	1,106,913	1,028,722	77,191	1,145,000	1,146,000	-	0.00%	6.63%
	Subtotal - Stewardship Team	\$323,811	\$7,164,403	\$6,664,341	\$500,062	\$7,346,973	\$7,346,239	(\$734)	-0.01%	36.11%
	<i>Conference Connectional Ministries</i>									
	Conference Connectional Ministries	\$615,762	\$13,407,154	\$12,471,360	\$935,794	\$14,072,829	\$14,081,314	\$8,485	0.06%	69.21%
86	World Service & Connectional Ministries	\$708,521	\$15,371,981	\$14,299,045	\$1,072,936	\$16,049,476	\$16,095,255	\$45,779	0.29%	79.11%
	<i>Past Service Liability</i>									
87	** Past Service Liability-Pensions	\$132,918	\$3,300,000	\$3,109,168	\$190,833	\$3,300,000	\$3,300,000	\$0	0.00%	16.22%
	<i>Other General Conference</i>									
88	** Episcopal Fund	\$23,950	\$533,704	\$510,536	\$23,168.36	\$543,697	\$565,233	\$21,536	3.96%	2.78%
89	** Africa University Fund	3,479	60,675	57,003	3,672	60,416	60,738	322	0.53%	0.30%
90	** Black College Fund	15,970	271,105	254,088	17,017	269,946	271,383	1,437	0.53%	1.33%
91	** Interdenominational Coop.Fund	3,600	52,962	49,472	3,490	52,664	53,016	352	0.67%	0.26%
92	Total Other General Apportionments	\$46,999	\$918,446	\$871,099	\$47,347	\$926,723	\$950,370	\$23,647	2.55%	4.67%
	Grand Total All Funds	\$888,438	\$19,590,427	\$18,279,312	\$1,311,115	\$20,276,199	\$20,345,625	\$69,426	0.34%	100.00%
	<i>Total General Conference</i>									
	Total General Conference	\$178,070	\$3,781,774	\$3,534,572	\$247,202	\$3,794,202	\$3,864,431	\$70,229	1.85%	18.99%
	Total Jurisdictional Conference	\$6								

CFA Report: Finance Minimum Standards & DS Salaries

Following are some of the sections of the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) Report that have changes and require a vote.

IV. LOCAL CHURCH FINANCE MINIMUM STANDARDS

Serving as a financial officer or in a financially related position within a local church requires that we serve with fiduciary responsibility over the financial matters of the church. This fiduciary responsibility means that we stand in service to perform our duties with the trust and confidence that we act for the benefit of the church and not for the benefit or convenience of ourselves. As we serve with these responsibilities in local churches, we are guided to provide the most effective and most efficient ways to safeguard the assets entrusted to our care. One of the ways we safeguard the assets is to put procedures in place that have been proven to minimize risks by preventing and detecting error, deterring fraud and protecting innocent staff and volunteers. The following guidelines have been developed in order to assist those with financial responsibilities in local churches to identify and implement basic internal control procedures. These guidelines are intended to aid in the prevention or deterrence of fraudulent behavior and are not accusations that fraudulent activities are being performed. These guidelines provide protection for those in a position of controlling financial activity from being accused of fraud. Part of the fulfillment of our calling to be good stewards of the Lord's funds is having effective procedures in place to safeguard those funds. These minimum standards should be increased for churches with higher volumes of transactions but should not be compromised for lower volumes of transactions. All local churches are expected to meet these minimum standards.

A. Receipts and Disbursements

1. Treasurer and Financial Secretary should not be the same person and should not be in the same immediate family residing in the same household

2. Counting team (at least two unrelated persons) should count offerings and document totals – not treasurer and not financial secretary

3. Offerings should be deposited the same or next business day

4. Offering count details should be given to financial secretary for recording

5. Offering totals should be given to the treasurer or financial secretary to record deposit

6. The Financial Secretary's deposit log should be compared to the bank statement to verify deposits (by bank reconciliation reviewer)

7. At least two persons should be listed as authorized signatures on all accounts

8. Financial policy and authority guidelines should be written and approved by the Finance Committee (a template is available on the Conference Treasurer's Office website).

9. Invoices should be required for all payments from all accounts

10. Someone other than the treasurer (with authority by Finance Committee) should approve invoices for payment

11. Typically, the Treasurer should make payments only after the invoice is approved. A policy may be implemented where routine, budgeted expenses (i.e., rent/mortgage, electric bill, etc.) may be paid without recurring approval; non-routine expenses must be approved prior to payment.

B. Reporting and Review

1. All accounts should be reconciled monthly

2. Someone other than treasurer should review bank reconciliation at least semiannually – including bank statements, invoices, checks written, and financial reports

3. The Treasurer should make

detailed report of budget and designated fund activities to the Finance Committee at least quarterly

4. There must be an annual evaluation of financial records – at least in as much detail as the Local Church Audit Guide (completed by May 1 for preceding year) – including ALL accounts of the church (except UMW may be under separate evaluation or audit) – ALL accounts includes the general fund, building funds, designated accounts, cemetery funds, discretionary funds, Sunday school accounts, etc.

5. An external annual audit of ALL accounts should be done at least every three years for churches with annual operating budget more than \$500,000 per year (completed by May 1 for preceding year). An annual evaluation should be performed during the interim years.

6. While a full audit is optimal, the term 'external audit' could mean a review by a CPA firm or other qualified individual (one with an accounting degree and accounting experience) that is independent of the church's Finance Committee or church council.

7. An external annual audit of ALL accounts should be done every year for churches with annual operating budget more than \$1,000,000 per year (completed by May 1 for preceding year). The term 'external audit' in this recommendation refers to an audit by an independent CPA or firm—not a member of the church. An opinion is given on the financial statements—both balance sheet and income statement.

8. For NC licensing purposes, if an individual CPA performs an audit, they must be a member of the church's audit committee performing the audit as a member of an audit team reporting to the Finance Committee.

C. Tax Reporting Requirements

1. W-2s must be issued for employ-

ees, including pastors, and 1099s issued for non-employee compensation by January 31 for preceding year (federal law requirement)

2. Payroll tax forms and deposits done as required for payroll amount (federal law requirement) – payroll reporting should be completed for the IRS and SSA by appropriate due date for filing method

3. Housing allowance or exclusions approved annually at charge conference and kept on file (federal law requirement)

D. Other General Requirements

1. Prepare list of all church property for insurance purposes – include item description, serial number and value

2. Prepare list of safety deposit box contents – update authority as needed – access should be allowed by two unrelated people

3. Computer records are backed up and password protected for security

4. Ideally, four individuals are required for regular financial procedures: financial secretary, treasurer, person to review and approve invoices and person to review bank reconciliations. It is possible for this to be accomplished with three individuals if proper segregation is achieved.

VI. DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENTS' SALARY

The Council on Finance and Administration recommends that the formula for computing the annual salary for the district superintendents be the average of the top 25 pastors' salaries in the Conference for the previous year. Salary is defined as cash salary plus nonvouchered allowances. We recommend the 2011 salary for district superintendents be set at \$101,994.



Clergy Executive Session held in May

With Annual Conference scheduled for one less day than previous years, the Clergy Executive Session was held in May. Among those who attended a luncheon at North Carolina Wesleyan College on May 14 in Rocky Mount, was Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr., shown here talking with Wesleyan senior Jacob Strickland, president of the college's Student Government Association. The luncheon for United Methodist ministers, held at the Wesleyan president's home, was hosted by President James A. Gray III and Wesleyan Chaplain the Rev. Barry P. Drum. More than 50 ministers in the North Carolina Conference are graduates of N.C. Wesleyan.

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Board of Pensions: Report B

Recommendations for the Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits

Please note: Listed below is the full Board of Pension Report B which has numerous recommended changes requiring a vote.

I. Funding Plan for Supplement

One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program

- A. **Defined Plan Benefits:** Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (Pre-82 Plan) provides defined benefit pension benefits to participating retired clergy for all service rendered to the North Carolina Conference through December 31, 1981. This plan will continue until all pastors with past service benefits and their surviving spouses are deceased and is administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB).
- B. **Current Past Service Rate:** For many years, the *Book of Discipline* has defined Pre-82 Plan defined benefits as a fixed payment per year of past service. This fixed payment is the Past Service Rate (PSR). The benefit goal is stated to be a PSR of 1% of the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). Participation in the Clergy Retirement Security Program requires that an Annual Conference maintain its PSR to at least 0.9% of the CAC. The **2010** CAC for the North Carolina Conference is **\$66,579**. The **2010** PSR is **\$626** or **0.94%** of the CAC. Our Conference Board would like to maintain a PSR of at least 0.9% of CAC. North Carolina CAC has increased by an average of 4.48% per year over the past 10 years. We estimate future PSR increases to average approximately 5.0% each year.
- C. **Funded Status:** The Conference is required to fund all future benefits of the Pre-82 Plan by December 31, 2021. Funded Status (previously called unfunded liability) is the difference of the current assets held by the GBOPHB for future benefits of North Carolina participants and the total present value of all future benefits to be paid under the plan at the approved PSR. The GBOPHB values assets and liabilities of the plan every two years and projects data to current years based on the increase in PSR and investment earnings. For the **2010** Funding Plan, GBOPHB and the Conference use an assumed earnings rate of 7.0%. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits has determined that the portion of the pre-82 plan liability attributable to North Carolina Annual Conference

is **\$51,397,193** with a 5.0% PSR increase assumption based on a **2010** PSR of **\$626**. Plan funds currently held with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits have a value of \$20,294,420 as of January 1, **2008** (for 2010 funding plan).

The difference between the total plan liability and current plan funding is **\$31,102,773**. This represents the unfunded plan liability and will be provided through apportionments and non-plan funds that are held in various investment sources. The Conference intends for contributions to be made within the **12**-year period, ending December 31, 2021. The minimum annual contribution due December 31, **2010** is currently estimated to be **\$2,603,119**.

- D. **Funding Plan for 2010:** Our conference pays for plan benefits through several potential funding sources. Both the interest and principal of non-plan funds may be available for retirement funding needs. Below is a description of the non-plan assets available to pay the present value of future contributions. Our Conference expects to utilize annual apportionments from the local churches as the primary source for pre-82 pension funding. Our Conference expects to receive annual apportionments in an amount of \$3,300,000 for **2010 through 2012**, then increasing \$200,000 each year through 2017. Apportionments of **\$4,300,000** are expected for the year **2017**. The present value of the expected apportionments is **\$21,623,073**. This apportionment funding was originally approved by the 1991 Annual Conference.

The Conference maintains a General Deposit Account with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits that has a value of **\$12,257,129** as of January 1, **2010**. Both the interest and principal from this account are available to meet future contribution requirements.

The Conference maintains and manages various liquid asset accounts that are available for Supplement One funding. The current value of these accounts are **\$1,831,082** as of January 1, **2010**. Both the interest and principal from these sources are available to meet future contribution requirements.

The Superannuate Endowment fund has a value of **\$344,592** as of January 1, **2010**. All of it is available except for the original balance of \$87,195.39, from which interest only is available.

The 2010 funding plan as of January 1, **2008** is summarized below:

Supplement One Liability:

Assuming A PSR Increase of 5.0%	\$51,397,193
Current Plan Funding as of 1/1/08	\$20,294,420
Unfunded Plan Liability as of 1/1/08	\$31,102,773
Projected Unfunded Plan Liability as of 1/1/10	\$35,496,615

Additional Plan Assets:

Present Value of Future Apportionments	\$ 21,623,073
General Deposit Account (GBOPHB)	\$ 12,257,129
Conference Managed Liquid Asset Accounts	\$ 1,831,082
Conference Superannuate Endowment Fund (GBOPHB)	\$ 344,592
Total Additional Plan Assets	\$ 36,055,876

Proposed Past Service Rate: The **2011** CAC for the North Carolina Conference is **\$67,702**. We propose that the past service rate beginning January 1, **2011** be increased to **\$639** per service year, or 2 of the CAC. Assuming 5% future PSR increases and 7.0% investment earnings, this increase creates an unfunded liability of **\$13,140,959**. The minimum annual contribution due December 31, **2011** is currently estimated to be **\$3,507,326**.

II. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) - (effective through Dec. 31, 2006)

Guidelines for the Ministerial Pension Plan and the Comprehensive Protection Plan are contained in the plan document. A copy of the summary plan document is available on request by contacting pension services in the treasurer's office.

- A. Service on and after January 1, 1982 through December 31, 2006 was funded on a defined contribution basis. This plan is basically deferred salary, and creates no unfunded liability because it builds an account of funds for a specific minister as his/her salary is paid.
- B. These contributions were placed in the individual minister's Church Account to be available for benefits when the minister becomes eligible for payment in the retired relationship.
- C. Each minister who is eligible for benefits will be required to designate beneficiaries for the benefits he/she is qualified to receive.

III. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)-(Effective Jan. 1, 2007)

Guidelines for the Clergy Retirement Security Program and the Comprehensive Protection Plan are contained in the plan document. A copy of the summary plan document is available on request by contacting pension services in the treasurer's office. Service on and after January 1, 2007 will be funded on a combined defined contribution/defined benefit basis.



for giving faithfully 100% to the apportionment covenant in 2009.

North Carolina Conference

Bishop Alfred W. Gwinn Jr.

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 Burlington - Rev. William H. Gattis, Durham - Rev. H. Gray Southern,
 Elizabeth City - Rev. Dr. R. Carl Frazier Jr., Fayetteville - Rev. Dr. Sam Wynn,
 Goldsboro - Rev. Charles M. Cook, Greenville - Rev. Elizabeth Hackney Hood,
 New Bern - Rev. Dennis M. Goodwin, Raleigh - Rev. Jonathan E. Strother,
 Rockingham - Rev. Leonard E. Farley, Rocky Mount - Rev. Samuel D. McMillan III,
 Sanford - Rev. Stephen C. Compton, Wilmington - Rev. M. Francis Daniel
Conference Treasurer - Christine Dodson
Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration - Rev. Danny Allen
Chair, Connectional Ministries - Carol Goehring

A. Moses Rathen Kumar,
 General Secretary and Treasurer
 General Council on Finance and Administration

Bishop Lindsey Davis,
 President, General Council on
 Finance and Administration

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
 The people of The United Methodist Church

Pensions: Report B - Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits from page 12

A. Defined Benefit

1. The Defined Benefit will be 1.25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) according to the plan document.
2. The Defined Benefit portion will be funded based on a percentage of Plan Compensation calculated on a yearly basis using up to the normal cost rate provided by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits multiplied by the annual interest rate. The current assumed interest rate is 7.0%. Therefore, the funding percentage rate for **2011** is 10.4% of Plan Compensation.

B. Defined Contribution

1. Benefits will be provided based on the participant's account balance at their actual retirement date.
2. The Defined Contribution portion funding is based on three percent (3%) of Plan Compensation.

C. Plan Compensation is calculated by the GBOPHB according to the plan document:

1. Vouchered travel and utilities paid directly to utility companies are not used in Plan Compensation calculations since this is considered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to be local church expense.
2. Clergy couples housing:
 - a. When only one of the spouses is furnished a parsonage, the one furnished the parsonage includes the housing allowance.
 - b. When one spouse is furnished the parsonage and the other a cash allowance, the one furnished the parsonage will use the 25% housing allowance and the other will report the actual cash housing paid.
 - c. When two parsonages are furnished each spouse claims a housing allowance.
 - d. When neither is furnished a parsonage, the actual cash housing allowance may be counted by the person/or persons receiving the allowance.
3. In accordance with the plan document, the housing allowance for those furnished housing is 25% times the cash salary.
4. Those furnished a cash housing allowance will report the actual amount in accordance with the plan document.

D. The Clergy Retirement Security Program contribution from the local church is to be paid monthly by the Church or Charge Treasurer to the Conference Treasurer's Office.

E. The Defined Contribution portions are placed in the individual minister's Church Account to be available for benefits when the minister becomes eligible for payment in the retired relationship.

F. Each minister who is eligible for benefits will be required to designate beneficiaries for the benefits he/she is qualified to receive.

IV. Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

A. This part of the program contains provisions for a death benefit and disability income. In addition to the provisions of a death benefit for the pastor, there is a death benefit on the life of the spouse and dependent children under age 18 or who are dependent because of disability. The Comprehensive Protection Plan also includes educational benefits for the children of a deceased minister. This part of the plan is only available to those ministers covered under the CPP, whose charges are paying at least minimum full-time salary.

1. Death Benefits provide \$50,000.00 as the benefit paid on the death of an eligible active participant. Upon retirement at any age, death benefits drop to **\$18,102.30** for the year **2010** and **\$18,514.80** for **2011**. This is 30% of the DAC.
2. Effective January 1, 2002, the disability benefit equals 70% of plan compensation, with plan compensation capped at 200% of the DAC. (The DAC for **2010** is **\$60,341** and for **2011** is **\$61,716**) The disability benefit is reduced by any disability benefits payable under the Social Security Act. This revised benefit applies only to eligible clergy whose disability effective date, as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, is on or after January 1, 2002.
3. The Comprehensive Protection Plan contribution from the local church is to be paid monthly by the Church or Charge Treasurer to the Conference Treasurer's Office. (Effective November 1, 2004)
4. Pastors who have been approved for a leave of absence for military service and who were enrolled in the CPP prior to the date of their leave will continue to be enrolled in the CPP under optional Conference enrollment.

B. Effective January 1, 2007, the cost of the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) will be funded by billing up to the calculated percentage to fund the CPP each year using the rate required by the General Board of Pension. For **2010**, the cost is a total of 3% of the actual Plan Compensation up to 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). The pastor shall be required to pay 1% of Plan Compensation (up to 1% of 200% of DAC) on an after tax basis and the church or charge shall pay 2% of the Plan Compensation (up to 2% of 200% of DAC). ¶1506.19 in *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

C. Per action by the General Board of Pension, the CPP premiums will be redirected to fund the liabilities of other components of the pension plan for 2011 through 2013.

V. Implementation of the Program

The benefit program adopted by your Conference Board of Pensions seeks to provide a wider range of support for the minister's family through death benefits for every member of the family, disability income for the minister in time of great stress, educational benefits for children of deceased ministers, minimum annuity benefits for surviving spouses, and clergy benefits based on the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC).

A. Costs of the Clergy Retirement Security Program/Comprehensive Protection Plan will be borne by the local charge as an item of ministerial support according to the Plan Compensation of the minister and the category of the charge.

1. Effective January 1, 2007

FULL TIME (Conference Member/Local Pastor) - 10.4% of Plan Compensation for CRSP Defined Benefit portion and 3% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Contribution portion and 2% of Plan Compensation for CPP (up to 2% of 200% of the DAC)

STUDENT (Conference Member/Local Pastor) - 10.4% of Plan Compensation for CRSP Defined Benefit portion and 3% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Contribution portion

LESS THAN FULL TIME (Conference Member/Local Pastor) - 10.4% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Benefit portion and 3% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Contribution portion

INTERIM OR RETIRED SUPPLY - no pension responsibility

B. Effective January 1, 2007 - Deacons and Probationary Deacons serving in Episcopal appointments to a local church or other entity that falls under the pension plan sponsorship of the Conference shall be enrolled in the plans according to the plan document.

C. The pastor will make regular monthly payments to the Conference Treasurer's Office through the local church treasurer for his/her 1% of Plan Compensation (up to 1% of 200% of the DAC) on an after tax basis for CPP.

D. It is recommended that the pastor make regular monthly payments through the local church treasurer to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for his/her personal tax-paid or tax-deferred contributions of at least 3%.

(The following, Item VI, was approved by the 1997 Annual Conference to be placed in effect at the conclusion of the Session of the Annual Conference, Year 2000:)

VI. Policies Related to Life and Health Insurance

A. The 2010 budget needed to fund health and life insurance, pension grants, administration, etc., is \$2,700,000.

B. Eligibility Policies

1. Five-Year Rule: A participant must be covered under the health in the Conference insurance plan for five consecutive and uninterrupted years immediately prior to the date of retirement in order to retain health insurance benefits after retirement.

2. Clergy persons who retire from the North Carolina Annual Conference with twenty or more full time years of earned pension credit in the North Carolina Annual Conference may receive life and health insurance benefits when the clergy person attains age 62 and receives pension benefits or retires with thirty (30) years of service and receives pension benefits provided at least twenty (20) of the thirty years of pension credit is in the North Carolina Annual Conference. The North Carolina pension credit record used to determine insurance funding for retiring Deacons in Full Connection shall consist of eligible North Carolina earned pension credit years in both the lay and clergy pension plans.

3. Effective July 1, 2007, clergy persons who retire at age 59 1/2 with 20 or more years may remain on the Conference insurance plan, provided written notification of this intent is provided to the Conference Benefits Manager. The clergy person will be responsible for 100% of the applicable monthly premium until the attainment of age 62 (Report B, Section VI B2). At the attainment of age 62, the monthly premium will be adjusted according to the retirement rules in place at the time of retirement. Monthly premiums will then be calculated at the applicable percentages as defined in Report B, Section VI D and E.

4. All retired clergy, spouses and surviving dependents must enroll in Medicare part A and part B when first eligible.

5. Effective August 1, 1992, Pastors who discontinued ¶313.1, or Probationary Members, ¶327.6, as well as Conference Members who are retired involuntarily, ¶358.3, who are granted Honorable Location, ¶359; who withdraw to unite with another denomination, ¶360.1; who surrender the ordained ministerial office ¶360.2; who withdraw under complaints or charges, ¶360.3; and Conference Members who are placed on Administrative Location, ¶362 are ineligible to receive retirement health or life insurance benefits when payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits begin. [Paragraphs noted are from *The Book of Discipline, 2008*]

C. Retirement prior to January 1, 2004

Clergy persons who retire prior to January 1, 2004 from the North Carolina

Pensions: Report B - Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits from page 13

Annual Conference will be subject to the current rate policy as outlined below. Effective January 1, 2004, there will be a minimum monthly contribution of \$10 per participant (for all surviving dependents and retirees with a clergy retirement date prior to January 1, 2004). The following policies apply:

- Before the retired clergy person and/or spouse reach the age of Medicare eligibility (currently 65 years of age), the retired clergy person will pay the amount of premium that he/she paid in the year in which he/she retires. The Conference Board of Pensions will pay the difference between the clergy person's payment and the costs of his/her health insurance. The retired clergy person must continue to pay the amount of premium that he/she paid in the year of retirement until both the retired clergy person and his/her spouse reach the age of Medicare eligibility. Billings will be made monthly from the Treasurer's Office.
- If a clergy person who, prior to retirement, has been covered as a single individual for the purposes of health insurance, wishes at the time of retirement to add family members to his/her health care plan, he/she must pay the premium applicable to that type of coverage for the year in which he/she retired. The retired clergy person must continue to pay that amount of premium until both the retired clergy person and his/her spouse reach the age of Medicare eligibility. A clergy person who retires from the North Carolina Annual Conference with less than twenty (20) full-time years of earned pension credit in the North Carolina Annual Conference may receive life and health insurance benefits when the clergy person attains age 62 and receives pension benefits or retires with thirty-five (35) years of service and receives pension benefits provided at least twenty of the thirty-five years of pension credit is in the North Carolina Annual Conference. Retired clergy persons and/or dependents with less than twenty years of earned pension credit in the North Carolina Annual Conference will be responsible for the monthly insurance premiums as described in #1 above, with the remaining monthly portion shared by the retired clergy person and/or dependents and the Conference Board of Pensions, based on the following formula:

Years of Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
1	95%	5%
2	90%	10%
3	85%	15%
4	80%	20%
5	75%	25%
6	70%	30%
7	65%	35%
8	60%	40%
9	55%	45%
10	50%	50%
11	45%	55%
12	40%	60%
13	35%	65%
14	30%	70%
15	25%	75%
16	20%	80%
17	15%	85%
18	10%	90%
19	5%	95%
20	\$10 Minimum	Remaining Premium

This payment formula remains in effect throughout the participant's lifetime (clergy person or surviving dependent).

D. Retirement after January 1, 2004

(Eligibility policies can be found in Report B, section VI B)

Effective January 1, 2004 the following schedule(s) will apply to all retired clergy and their eligible dependents, whose retirement date is January 1, 2004 or later.

1. Medicare Eligible (retiree and/or dependents)

Years of NC Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
0-4	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
5-9	80%	20%
10-14	70%	30%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

2. Age Less than Medicare Eligible (retiree and/or dependents)**

Years of NC Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
0-4	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
5-9	80%	20%
10-14	70%	30%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

- **The minimum monthly premium billed to the individual will be no less than the active monthly personal portion of the premium for the applicable coverage type.

E. Retirement after January 1, 2007 (revised June 2008)

(Eligibility policies can be found in Report B, Section VI B.)

- Effective January 1, 2007 the Conference Board of Pensions will fund only the % above as applied to the Medicare Companion plan rate. Retirees and/or dependents not yet Medicare eligible age will be responsible for the difference between the funded amount as calculated based on the above table(s) and the remaining cost of full coverage.
- The above % of the Medicare Companion plan premium will be applied to the total active family rate until both the retiree and spouse attain the Medicare eligibility age.
- Participants who retired under provision E1, (2007 rule) will have their rates recalculated effective July 1, 2008 to comply with the new E2 provision.

F. Retirement after July 1, 2009

(Eligibility policies can be found in Report B, Section VI B.)

Clergy under appointment as of June 30, 2009

- Post retirement **health insurance** plan eligibility for clergy who are licensed, commissioned, or ordained under NC Episcopal appointment to a NC Conference responsible appointment (i.e., eligible for enrollment in the Conference Insurance Plan) as of June 30, 2009 will be determined using years of NC pension credit/pension eligibility accrued through June 30, 2009. Effective July 1, 2009, accrual of future year's credit toward post retirement benefits will be determined by months of enrollment in the Conference insurance plan with a minimum of 60 months immediately preceding retirement.
- The retiree must participate in the NC **Health Insurance** Plan for 60 consecutive months immediately prior to the date of retirement.
- In order to maintain insurance benefits after retirement, the retiree must be enrolled in the applicable coverage immediately preceding the date of retirement.**
- Clergy with 60 months of participation in the NC **Health Insurance** Plan immediately prior to retirement, but less than 180 months in the plan (over the course of career) will have access to the NC **Conference Health Insurance** Plan and contribute the full cost of the **applicable coverage of the plan**.
- The retiree may only cover dependents that are covered at the time of retirement.
- Funding will be based on the chart printed below:

Years of NC Pension Credit/Years in NC Insurance Plan	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
0 - 4	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
5 - 9 - 14	80% 100%	20% 0%
10-14	70%	30%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

G. Newly appointed Clergy (licensed, commissioned or ordained receiving first time appointment) effective July 1, 2009

- Post retirement **health insurance** plan eligibility for clergy newly licensed, commissioned or ordained effective July 1, 2009, under Episcopal appointment to a NC Conference responsible appointment (i.e., eligible for enrollment in the Conference Insurance plan) will be based on total months enrolled in the Conference Insurance Plan with a minimum of 180 months total enrollment with 60 consecutive months enrollment immediately preceding the date of retirement for funding eligibility.

Pensions: Report B - Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits from page 14

2. Participants who meet the 60 consecutive months enrollment but do not meet the 180 months minimum will have access to the plan with no funding from the Conference Board of Pensions. The participant will be responsible for 100% of the applicable premiums.
3. Credited enrollment in the insurance plan, once earned, will not be reduced or terminated due to breaks in enrollment.
4. Funding will be based on the following:

Years of NC Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
0 - 4	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
5 - 14	100%	0%
15 - 19	60%	40%
20 - 24	50%	50%
25 - 29	40%	60%
30 - 34	30%	70%
35 - 39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

H. Life Insurance - A clergy person must have been covered under the conference active life insurance plan in order to retain life insurance benefits after retirement. The Board of Pensions does not provide life insurance for dependents of retired clergy.

I. Clergy Couples Insurance

1. When one member of a clergy couple retires, medical and life insurance will be paid for the retiree according to the schedules and rules previously listed.
2. Health insurance will be provided for the spouse and eligible dependents of the retired clergy partner according to the rules and schedules previously listed.
3. *Each member of a clergy couple would receive credit for the years they were covered under the plan.*

J. Surviving Spouses

Surviving spouses of active participants:

1. Must be enrolled in the health insurance plan at the time of the participant's death in order to receive health insurance benefits under the current health insurance plan.
2. The Conference Board of Pensions will pay the health insurance premiums for surviving spouses and eligible dependents for up to six months following the death of the active clergy person.
3. Premiums thereafter will be determined by the retirement rules in place on the date of death.
4. When surviving spouses are employed and provided health insurance by their employer, the plan of the Board of Pensions will be the secondary carrier.
5. If the surviving spouse remarries, the conference health insurance will terminate. Future benefits under the conference health insurance plan are waived.

Surviving spouses of retired participants:

1. Surviving spouses of retired clergy must be enrolled in the health insurance plan at the time of the retired clergy's death in order to receive health insurance benefits under the current health insurance plan.
2. Surviving spouses currently enrolled who married the clergy person after the clergy person's retirement, can remain covered by the health insurance plan. The Board of Pensions grants a flat rate of \$150.00 monthly towards the cost of the surviving spouse's coverage. The remaining premium will be the responsibility of the surviving spouse.

Continued in next column

3. Surviving spouses of retired clergy who married the clergy person prior to the clergy person's retirement are subject to the payment schedule applicable prior to the death of the clergy person.
4. Effective January 1, 2001 retired clergy persons may not add new dependents to the health insurance plan.

VII. Intent

The North Carolina Annual Conference established health, dental, and life insurance plans with the intent of providing coverage for the active and retired pastors. However, the Annual Conference reserves the right to terminate the health, dental, and life contracts, in whole or in part, at any time. The Annual Conference, at any time or from time to time, may amend any or all of the provisions of the health or life plans without the consent of the individual participants.

VIII. Dental Insurance

The Board of Pensions recommends that retired ministers covered under the health insurance plan have dental insurance. Dental benefits became available on July 1, 1987.

IX. Maximum Lifetime Benefit Under the Medicare Companion Plan. The lifetime maximum under the current Medicare Companion Plan is \$5,000,000 for each participant.

X. Special Provisions

The North Carolina Annual Conference Board of Pensions is hereby authorized, at its discretion, to arrange with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for active participation in the CRSP and/or CPP by persons who are eligible under special rules but not automatically included as active participants. (CRSP Plan Document Section 3.3 and CPP Plan Document Section 3.2.)

XI. Conclusion

Our constant aim is to provide our retired families with their needs for an adequate income to purchase essentials for living as well as to insure adequate care in case of illness. To these ends our recommendations are directed, and their satisfaction is found in the acceptance of the North Carolina Conference and its membership.



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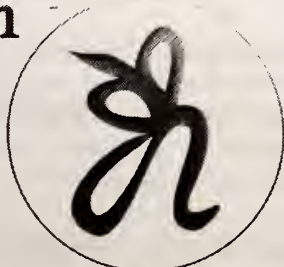
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Commission on Equitable Compensation

For the year **2010**, the average full-time salary increase was approximately **1.75%**. The CPI (Urban South) for the last twelve months ending December **2009** showed a **decrease of 0.4%**. The Commission currently recommends a **0% (\$0)** increase in Salary, a **0% (\$0)** increase in Utilities, and a **0% (\$0)** increase in Travel. Including the recommended travel amount this represents a total increase of **0%** for the year **2011**. Our recommendation is based on several factors: (1) the average compensation from other conferences; (2) it more closely reflects the majority of salary increases for this conference; (3) shows concern for general economic trends.

I. Recommended Schedule of Minimum Compensation for 2011:

A. Salary Schedule

We recommend that the student minimum salary be based on 65% of the minimum salary of full-time pastors.

	2010	2011
PASTORS UNDER FULL-TIME APPOINTMENT (Full Connection, Associate, Probationary, Local Pastor)		
Salary.....	\$ 40,319.00	\$ 40,319.00
STUDENT PASTORS (Local Pastors or Conference Members)		
Salary.....	\$ 26,207.00	\$ 26,207.00

B. Utilities Expense

It is recommended that *each local charge would provide at least \$2,400 for utilities expense*. Utilities have been defined in guidance from the Internal Revenue Service to be electricity, heat, water/sewer, trash pick-up, and local telephone expenses. In order to increase accountability surrounding utility payments and to help ease transitions during appointment changes, the Commission recommends that the local church pay utilities directly to the utilities companies instead of through unvouchered allowances to the pastors.

C. Travel Expense

Although travel is reimbursed by the local charge as an item of pastoral expense, it is expected that *each local charge would provide at least \$4,000 for travel expense*. The Commission encourages each charge to establish a plan to reimburse the pastor for all legitimate business mileage at the current rate established by the IRS. Where such a plan is established for reimbursement of business mileage, equitable compensation support shall not be affected by payment of travel expenses. However, where a reimbursement plan is not implemented and a travel allowance is given, *any travel allowance in excess of \$4,000 will result in a reduction of equitable compensation support*.

D. Pension Program

Charges receiving Equitable Compensation Funds support are responsible for paying the total amount required for the Clergy Pension Plan and the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) based on the pastor's cash base compensation (including funds from the Equitable Compensation Fund, Duke Endowment, and any other sources), and housing (percentage of cash base compensation designated by the General Board of Pension/Health Benefits or housing allowance, if provided in lieu of a parsonage).

II. Principles Governing Eligibility for Equitable Compensation Funds:

The pastor's ~~clergy's~~ base compensation is the responsibility of the charge; therefore, each charge of The North Carolina Annual Conference should be so arranged as to be able to assume full salary support. The Commission urges each charge receiving Equitable Compensation Funds, its pastor, and the district superintendent responsible for that charge, to administer the affairs of that charge to the end that it may move as rapidly as possible toward total self-support. To enable the Annual Conference, the Commission and the district superintendents to carry on their cooperative efforts in understanding, in harmony, and for the greatest good for all concerned, the following principles and procedures are set forth:

- A. **Base Compensation:** In considering the base compensation for the charge, all income, including base compensation, bonuses, and other benefits not specifically excluded, are included as base compensation in determining appropriations from the Equitable Compensation Fund. Base compensation support for retired supply, interim supply, part-time local pastors, less than full-time conference members, or associate pastors in other than larger parish arrangement of churches will not be available. Equitable Compensation funds shall not be used to supplement amounts above minimum full-time compensation.
- B. **Annual Stewardship Campaign:** Churches receiving Equitable Compensation Funds shall conduct an annual financial/stewardship campaign in the second year of receiving Equitable Compensation funds, to accurately gauge the level of financial support the local church can reasonably expect from its members.
- C.B. **Any Equitable Compensation Fund supplement will be terminated immediately** upon information that the pastor has taken full-time, secular employment. The supplement may be reinstated at the time the charge's appointed pastor returns to full-time or student status. Exceptions to this provision will be permitted only by the approval of the executive committee of the Commission on Equitable Compensation upon the recommendation of

the district superintendent of the pastor seeking to be employed outside their ministerial responsibilities for emergency reasons.

- D. **C. Disbursement of funds from Conference Treasurer's Office:** Equitable Compensation Funds are to be sent to charges that have applied for their use to provide their pastor with the minimum base compensation established by the Annual Conference. The monthly base compensation supplement checks sent by the Conference Treasurer's office are to be deposited by the charge treasurer into the charge/church bank account. *Checks shall not be endorsed nor cashed by the pastor.*
- E. **D. Application for funds:** Churches or charges applying for Equitable Compensation Funds shall submit a request on the appropriate form. ~~supplied by the district superintendent. The pastor, recording secretary of the charge conference, Administrative Council, and the district superintendent, shall carefully analyze-review the request. The application form must have the signatures of the pastor, recording secretary of the charge conference, and the district superintendent affixed to it, and receive the approval of the charge conference. Applications received that are not completed in full are not eligible for consideration by the Commission until such time that they have been completed and resubmitted.~~
- F. The Commission on Equitable Compensation will not fund any charge that is also receiving funds from The Emerging Church Salary Fund. The Commission on Equitable Compensation plans further consultation and study with other Conference boards and agencies to seek ways to more adequately provide for the temporal needs of our pastors and churches.
- G. ~~In some instances, for missional reasons;~~ Consideration may be given to make funds available for the deacon ~~in full connection~~ when the primary appointment is to a local church. (Discipline 2008, paragraph 625.4)

III. Policies Governing Use of Equitable Compensation Funds

- A. **Charges must be so arranged that no more than one third (1/3) of the total base compensation will come from the Equitable Compensation Fund on the first application of the charge.**
 1. **Charges seeking more than one third (1/3) supplement** shall provide specific information with their application, indicating the reasons for their inability to meet these guidelines. Information shall be made available to the Commission on Equitable Compensation and the district superintendent regarding the terms of Equitable Compensation support, giving the date of its inception and the present amount of support being received by the respective charges.
 2. **When the division of a charge is desired,** Equitable Compensation funds will be used only upon the recommendation of the Bishop and the approval of the cabinet. In the division of a charge in which one church seeks to become a station, it is recommended that such a church shall assume total responsibility for base compensation and its proportionate share of all apportionments.
 - a. The remainder of the charge in such a division assumes full pastoral support and proportionate share of all apportionments. In no case will the Commission on Equitable Compensation provide more than one third (1/3) of the base compensation required for such a division.
 - b. When there is a division of a charge forming one or more student appointments, each newly created charge shall pay initially two thirds (2/3) of the pastoral support established by the division.
- B. **Annual Reduction and Length of Time for Support:**
 1. The Commission further recommends that Each charge which is receiving, or shall hereafter receive, Equitable Compensation Fund assistance, ~~shall be expected to~~ reduce this aid by at least twenty-five percent (25%) each year, until the charge has achieved full self-support in five (5) years.
 2. ~~A minimum mandatory reduction of ten percent (10%) will be required each year.~~
 3. ~~At the end of the fourth (4th) year an evaluation shall be conducted with the church and the district superintendent to evaluate the ability of the church to sustain a full time appointment in the future.~~
 4. ~~After review by the cabinet and the Commission, an extension in the length of time for support can be granted for missional purposes. The Commission wants to be clear at this point that its intent in this recommendation is that each charge will accept in full whatever increases are made in the minimum base compensation for their pastor each year and receive at least ten percent (10%) less each year in assistance from Equitable Compensation Funds than granted the previous year.~~
- C. **Merit Grant Supplemental to Base Compensation:** Each full-time minister, associate member, or member in full connection of The N.C. Annual Conference, serving full time, and who, in the opinion of the cabinet is rendering unusually effective service, may apply for a grant in the amount of \$400, when such clergy person's salary and utilities are equal to the Conference minimum base compensation.
 1. This grant must be applied for on an annual basis, with an annual incremental increase of \$400 per year, not to exceed \$2,000 per year, for five years of full-time service. This grant may not exceed a lifetime maximum of \$6,000. Special

Conference Guest Speakers

Richard Hays is opening worship, All Saints Celebration preacher

Richard B. Hays, the George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, is the preacher for the Annual Conference All Saints Celebration and Service of Holy Communion at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 10.

Hays is internationally recognized for his work on the letters of Paul and on New Testament ethics.

He will become dean of the Duke Divinity School for a two-year term beginning July 1.

His scholarly work has bridged the disciplines of biblical criticism and literary studies, exploring the innovative ways in which early Christian writers interpreted Israel's Scripture.

His book, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation*, was selected by *Christianity Today* as one of the 100 most important religious books of the twentieth century.

His most recent books are *The Art of Reading Scripture* (2003, co-edited with Ellen Davis), *The Conversion of the Imagination* (2005), and *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (2008, co-edited with Beverly Roberts Gaventa).

Hays has lectured widely in North America, Europe, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand.

An ordained United Methodist minister, he has preached in settings ranging from rural Oklahoma churches to London's Westminster Abbey.

He has chaired the Pauline Epistles Section of the Society of Biblical Literature, as well as the Seminar on New Testament Ethics in the Society for New Testament Studies, and has served on the editorial boards of several leading scholarly journals.

Hays received an honorary doctorate (Dr. theol. honoris causa) from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2009.



Richard Hays

Tom Morris to be laity event speaker on Friday

Tom Morris, a nationally recognized philosopher who is a local church member in the NC Conference, will be the speaker at the 7:30 p.m. speaker at the Laity Celebration June 11.

Morris will talk about "True Success in Times of Change" and how this relates to the local church ministries. He is a long-time member of Wrightsville UMC in Wrightsville Beach.

He is described as being "one of the most active philosophers in the world because of his unusual ability to bring the greatest wisdom of the past into the challenges of the present," in his biographical information.

Morris, a distinguished Alumnus of the Durham Academy, was a Morehead Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill and holds a Ph.D. in both Philosophy and Religious Studies from Yale University. For 15 years, he was professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Currently he is chairman of the Morris Institute for Human Values. His 12th book, *True Success: A New Philosophy of Excellence*, led him to become an advisor to the corporate world. In addition, he leads Morris Institute Wisdom Retreats.

At Wrightsville UMC, Morris enjoys Bible study opportunities, chances to discuss philosophy and classic theology, and occasionally playing a little guitar at informal church events. Recently, a Sunday school class served as the "focus group" for his next book.



Tom Morris



African Children's choir sings Friday

By Emily Innes *

The African Children's Choir, which will perform during the Friday evening Laity Celebration, is made up of some of the most vulnerable children in their countries.

Many of the 30 children in the choir have lost one or both parents to poverty or disease.

Children spend approximately five months at the Choir Training Academy in Kampala, Uganda. There children learn songs, dances, attend

school, Sunday school, and play. This provides a break from the daily hardships the young children face at home.

The African Children's Choir is committed to helping children physically, spiritually, emotionally, and academically, giving each child an opportunity to reach their God-given potential. While touring with the choir the children are exposed to a world of new possibilities. Chaperones, host communities, and caring professionals share their wide variety

of experiences with the children, encouraging them to dream.

After returning to Africa the African Children's Choir provides care and education that builds on the unique international exposure the children experienced.

The Conference Board of Laity is proud to welcome the African Children's Choir to Annual Conference this year.

* Emily Innes is chair of the Board of Laity and Conference lay leader.

Cokesbury Bookstore Display Hours

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8 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
Thursday and Friday,
June 10-11

8-10 a.m.
Saturday, June 12

Site proposals for Annual Conference 2011

The location of the 2011 annual conference will be decided this year. The vote to go to Greenville for two years took place in 2008 when members voted to go to Greenville for 2009 and 2010 for package cost savings. The Greenville Convention Center has been booked for several years for the dates in 2011 and will be unavailable (the Greenville bid listed below is for 2012).



Fayetteville Charlie Rose Expo Center and ballrooms

Bid: \$26,903

- ◆ No parking fees.
- ◆ Hotels and restaurants are not within walking distance and are approximately 5-6 miles away. Hotels range in price from \$69 - \$125.
- ◆ Methodist University housing available priced at \$21 - \$25 per night.



Greenville Convention Center

Bid: \$18,900

- ◆ NOTE: This proposal is actually for 2012 and 2013. Due to a scheduling conflict, Greenville is not available for 2011.
- ◆ No parking fees
- ◆ Hotels and restaurants within walking distance. Hotel prices ranges from \$104. Other hotels in close proximity begin at \$69.
- ◆ East Carolina Univeristy housing available at \$20 - \$25 per person.

This vote will take place around 4:00p.m. on Friday, June 11.

Below are brief summaries of the proposals received. These are the bottom line figures. The meeting space at all venues will be classroom seating (tables and chairs.)

The proposal summaries are as follows with bids:



Raleigh Convention Center

Bid: \$20,200

- ◆ This is a new convention center. The Raleigh Business Development fund will pay meeting room costs of our conference. This would be approximately \$20,200.00 and is dependent upon our having a peak hotel rental of 500 rooms and multi-year contract.
- ◆ Daily parking fee.
- ◆ Some Hotels and restaurants within walking distance. Hotels close by range from \$129 to \$190; hotels in outlying areas range from \$69 - \$100.
- ◆ Dorm housing is being researched and may be possible.



Wilmington Convention Center

Bid: \$22,725

- ◆ This is a new convention center that will open in November 2010.
- ◆ Daily parking fee with some offset by the Visitors Bureau.
- ◆ Some hotels and restaurants within walking distance. Hotels close by the center are \$109 to \$159. Others, 2-3 miles away, start at \$69.
- ◆ UNC-Wilmington housing available for \$21 - \$25 per person.

Board of Trustees Report

A report from the Board of Trustees will be given on Friday morning during Annual Conference.

This report will provide an update on the progress on construction of the new conference office building. This report is not being included in the overall financial picture reports because the policies and requests for funding for the operational and capital needs of the facility are not changing. This funding is provided in the Stewardship Team section of the annual conference budget in the Operating Fund line.

The funding to pay for the facility was provided primarily through the

sale of the former United Methodist Building on Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh and the sale of the adjoining Wade Avenue property.

Updates on the conference office building project as well as clergy retreat property and the property insurance trust are given in the Trustees' annual conference report.

The dedication service for the new conference building and for the Dixon Chapel and Meeting Room, named in honor of the late Dr. Sam Dixon, was held June 6. Photos and information about the service will be included in the July/August edition of the *Advocate*.

Frequently Asked Questions: Finance & Pensions

From questions asked during
the Annual Conference
Briefing Session in May

By Christine Dodson *

Q: When will the budget be presented?

A: The 2012 annual conference budget will be presented during the financial overview report on Thursday, June 10 in the afternoon. The vote on the budget will be made near the close of business on Friday, June 11. Any motions that may impact funding will need to be presented on Thursday afternoon so that their implication can be studied by the Council on Finance and Administration and vote can be taken on Friday afternoon (per the Annual Conference rules).

Q: Since we reduced annual conference by one day, why is there still a \$22,000 increase in that budget line in the 2012 budget?

A: The \$22,000 increase in the 2012 budget is reflective of an inflationary increase in the funding spent for annual conference in 2009 as well as what is projected for 2010. The time for annual conference is being reduced for 2010. As part of this reduction there are some opportunities for cost savings (including housing for one less night) and there are some costs that remain the same (including facility rental since we must rent for the entire week due to set up times). Costs for annual conference are being reduced as possible and the exact effects of the reduction in time will be better known after annual conference in 2010. The 2012 budget is a projection based upon known past amounts including some projection for inflationary increases. Venue choices and event duration will change the actual needs and the projection is given in a best attempt to properly fund the event when those choices are made.

Q: I see that the proposal for minimum salary does not include an increase for 2011. Won't this be the second year with no increase? Is there a cost-of-living increase that is given?

A: The recommendation from the Commission on Equitable Compensation is that the minimum salary for full-time and student appointments remain the same as in 2010. The Commission did recommend an increase in the 2009 annual conference for 2010 and that was changed from the floor of annual conference during the 2009 session and set to remain at the 2009 level. This recommendation would make the minimum salary be the same for 2011 for the second year with no increase in the minimum. There is no separate cost-of-living increase given through this recommendation though there may be local churches who gave increases even though the minimum salary in the equitable compensation report did not reflect an increase.

Q: How many minimum salary appointments are there in the conference?

A: There are currently 78 full-time appointments exactly set at \$40,319 for salary. There are 3 more within \$10 above that figure and another 16 within \$500 above that figure. These are primarily senior pastor appointments but there are also 9 associate pastor appointments included in these numbers.

Q: What is the break down of the past service year rate increase of 2.1% in the Board of Pension report?

A: The increase in the per service year rate (PSR) refers to the benefit paid to retirees who have service years under the pre-1982 pension plan. The recommendation from the Board of Pension (BOP) is that the PSR increase by 2.1% - from \$626 in 2010 to \$639 in 2011. The recommendation came from the BOP after reviewing several factors including the average salary increase for full-time appointments for 2010 (1.75% increase), the social security cost-of-living adjustment for 2010 (0%), and the percent change in the consumer price index at the end of 2009 (-0.4%). This change will result in a liability for that pension plan of \$49,542,875.

When we add in the assets we have on hand to fund this liability, we are unfunded by \$13,140,959 if we assume 5% future increases in the PSR and 7% investment earnings (as defined in the funding plan approved by Annual Conference in 1991).

The funding for the pre-1982 pension plan comes through the Past Service Liability apportionment being paid by local churches. We are required to fund this by 2021 and are on track to fund it a little early due to positive investment returns and other actuarial gains. The rate at which we increase the PSR affects the apportionment as it increases the liability due to funded the benefits to be paid. As an example, the liability resulting if there were no increase in PSR for 2011 (all other assumptions the same), is \$48,559,880 or almost \$1 million less than the proposal from the BOP. The liability that would result from a 5% increase in PSR would be \$50,903,962 or almost \$1.4 million increase over the proposal from the BOP.

To put these differences in perspective, the difference between no increase in PSR and a 5% increase as defined in the funding plan is about \$2.4 million. When these liability numbers are plugged into the funding plan model, the resulting apportionment funding stream shows a difference of one more year on the past service liability apportionment at the current level of \$3.3 million than with no increase at all. The current projections estimate the plan being funded in full around 2018 (of course, that is subject to change with market conditions and actuarial gains or losses). The BOP studies these conditions each year when making the recommendation for the PSR for the next year as well as the request for the apportionment level for the Past Service Liability apportionment in the budget being considered at annual conference.

Q: Why do district superintendents make so much money?

A: The salary of the district superintendent is set by Annual Conference based upon vote of a recommendation from the Council on Finance and Administration. The current policy for DS salary is that it be set at the average of the top 25 salaries plus unvouchered cash allowances for local church appointments in the conference. This formula results in the salary for 2011 being proposed by CFA. The annual conference will vote on this recommendation at annual conference on Thursday afternoon as part of the financial overview section of the agenda.

Q: There seems to be a discrepancy between the district superintendent salary increase being proposed and the reduction in that budget line in the 2012 budget. How can salary go up and the budget line go down?

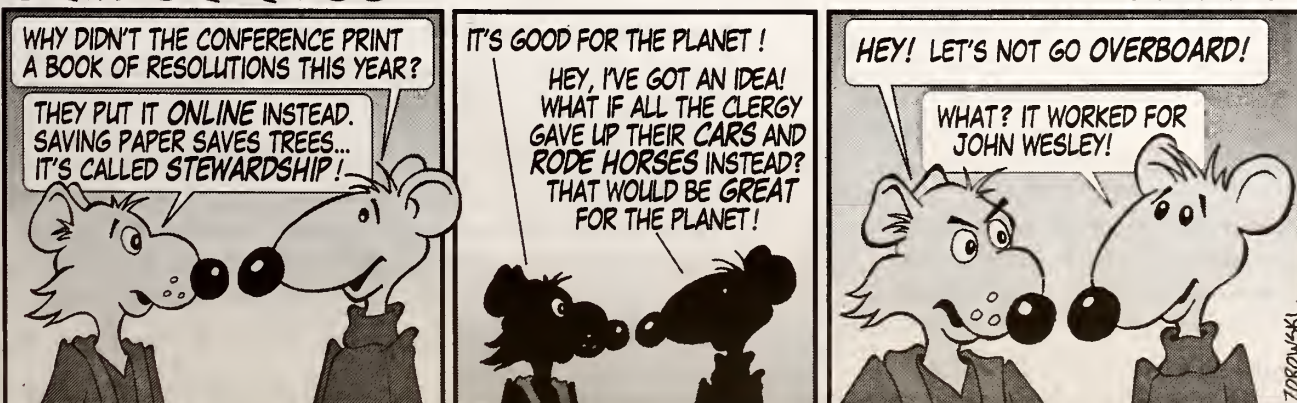
A: The salary being proposed by CFA is for 2011 and shows a 1.6% proposed increase. That proposal is calculated by a formula of the top 25 salaries plus unvouchered cash allowances for local church appointments. As those salaries and cash allowances change, the result of the formula will also change.

The budget request being presented is for 2012 and includes funding for the salary and pension benefits for the district superintendents. Since the budget is proposed at one annual conference to be raised the next year and spent the next year, the salary budget lines are requested using a projection of what the salary changes may be for the next two years.

The 2012 budget for that line was projected for the past several years like other salary and benefit lines at 3.5% increase. Since the salary has not changed at the projected rate, the 2012 budget request reflects an adjustment to that line for the actual changes with a projection of increases moving forward from the 2010 salary.

* Christine Dodson is conference treasurer.

Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

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Let's Journey To....

Israel/Palestine

Make a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from Raleigh, NC with others from the NC Conference! *Space is Limited - Call Today*

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Proposed Resolutions

RESOLUTION 1

Whereas: Evangelism is our calling by our Lord Jesus Christ;

Whereas: District Superintendents are chosen for their leadership abilities;

Whereas: Success in their ability to win people to Christ through professions of faith is one such gift as recognized by our sitting Bishop;

Whereas: Pastors serving congregations can benefit from the experience of their District Superintendent as soul winners;

Whereas: When pastors benefit local congregations will also benefit by the increase of membership other than just the transfer of members from other United Methodist Churches or other denominations;

Whereas: The North Carolina Annual Conference has a wealth of gifts and graces found within the leadership of its District Superintendents;

Be it resolved: We the members of the North Carolina Annual Conference request that each District Superintendent provide annual evangelism training for the pastors in their district;

And be it resolved: Since profession of faith is used to determine a pastor's effectiveness each District Superintendent is requested to work with individual pastors who cannot report prior their annual consultation any person or persons brought into the Church by Profession of Faith during that Conference calendar year until that pastor can celebrate a soul won to Jesus Christ;

Be it further resolved: That each District Superintendent report in writing in The Conference Reports and Resolutions under the "Report of the District Superintendents" for each Annual Conference year the results of such evangelistic endeavors.

Rev. J. Quinton Covington, Retired, Rockingham District

RESOLUTION 2

Whereas: Both clergy and laity are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ;

Whereas: Local Congregations are evaluated by their evangelistic efforts as being "effective";

Whereas: Pastors serving congregations are required to give an annual report to their faithfulness in winning people to Christ thereby adding both to the Kingdom of God and the United Methodist Church;

Whereas: Pastors serving congregations are evaluated by our Bishop on such evangelistic efforts to determine their "effectiveness" as a pastor to adding persons to the Church roll;

Whereas: Pastors serving congregations are selected and appointed by the sitting Bishop to become District Superintendents;

Whereas: Pastors chosen to become District Superintendents are chosen for their leadership ability and successful evangelism is one such ability;

Be it resolved: To insure equity in evaluations of "effectiveness" by our Bishop upon all clergy regardless of their appointed status the members of the North Carolina Annual Conference therefore request that each District Superintendent include in their annual "Report of the District Superintendents" as found in the Conference Reports and Resolutions the number of persons they have personally won to Christ by professions of faith within the Conference year, and as a result added to the Kingdom of God and to the United Methodist Church.

Rev. J. Quinton Covington, Retired, Rockingham District

Equitable compensation from page 16

attention shall be given to ethnic pastors serving ethnic ministries (*Book of Discipline 2008*, paragraph 625.6). Said incremental increase is to be administered by the Commission on Equitable Compensation upon the recommendation of the cabinet, approval by the charge conference, and the district superintendent.

2. Further, the local church shall be responsible for all Clergy Pension Plan and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) payments on incremental increase.

3. This policy does not restrict the Commission on Compensation, upon the recommendation of the cabinet, from making additional grants in extraordinary circumstances.

~~D. Anticipated future funding needs: The cabinet shall report to the Executive Committee of the Commission the anticipated Equitable Compensation funding needs immediately after the first appointment session prior to Annual Conference.~~

IV. The Commission reports that 16 charges received a total of **\$72,020.31** in compensation assistance in the year **2009**.

RESOLUTION 3

CONFERENCE MEDICAL INSURANCE

Whereas the North Carolina Conference (NCC) of The United Methodist Church is rightly obligated to provide both pension and medical insurance for its retired pastors and surviving spouses;

Whereas all the churches of the NCC are currently obligated to pay their fair share of the unfunded pension liability;

Whereas the unfunded liability for providing medical insurance for our retired pastors and surviving spouses is being paid only by full-time churches which pay for conference medical insurance for their active pastors and / or staff; and

Whereas many of our part-time churches are served by retired pastors;

Therefore be it resolved that all part-time churches be obligated to pay, beginning on January 1, 2011, 10 % of their pastor's salary toward the conference's unfunded medical insurance liability for NCC retired pastors and surviving spouses; and

Be it further resolved that all full-time churches which are not currently paying for conference medical insurance for their active pastor(s) and staff also be obligated to pay, beginning on January 1, 2011, 10 % of the total salary paid to pastors and staff toward medical insurance for NCC retired pastors and surviving spouses.

Submitted by Rev. H. Paul Harris Cedar Island/ Sea Level Charge New Bern District of the UMC

RESOLUTION 4

AN APPEAL TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NORTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS there is a growing recognition that human trafficking is one of the great human rights of injustice of the 21st century; and

WHEREAS more women, young girls, and little girls are forced into sexual slavery annually than slaves were transported to the New World at the peak of the transatlantic slave trade; and

WHEREAS it is impossible to know exactly how many are being sold and forced into prostitution every year; and

WHEREAS the numbers cited in a comprehensive United Nations report from February 2009 on human trafficking are staggering; and

WHEREAS the world's numbers range from 20,000 to 50,000 each year; and

WHEREAS 79% of human trafficking is for sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS those sold into prostitution become mere cheaply sold livestock and many are treated worse than animals; and

WHEREAS many choose to be silent about their rapes and find it very difficult to speak against their sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS their numbers serve as a terrifying testimony to the lack of legal action against their abusers; and

WHEREAS implementation of humanitarian laws that already exist are rarely enforced;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that our annual conference become a major and vital voice to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2010 Annual Conference calls upon our state and local law enforcement officials to enforce the laws that already exist to help abolish human trafficking in our state by fighting and upholding the legal action against all sexual abusers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our Conference Secretary send a copy of this resolution to our State Attorney General; the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission; and to North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys.

Rev. Dr. Milford Oxendine, Jr., Chadbourn/Evergreen Charge

The Governor's Crime Commission 1201 Front Street, Suite 200 Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Attorney General's Office 9001 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-9001

North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys 901 Corporate Center Drive Raleigh, NC 27607-5045

Proposed Resolutions *continued from page 20*

RESOLUTION 5

WE WILL NOT DISCRIMINATE

Whereas when our predecessors framed The United Methodist Church, they built the characteristic of inclusiveness and human rights into our church constitution, and

Whereas "inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the church, the community and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination." [Paragraph 139, 2008 Discipline], and

Whereas "the mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supportive of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community and the world." [Paragraph 139, 2008 Discipline], and

Whereas "we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against gays and lesbians." [Paragraph 162-H, Social Principles], and

Whereas "we insist that all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured." [Paragraph 161-G, Social Principles], and

Whereas there are those in our worldwide church who have argued that all non-heterosexual and nongender-conforming people should be excluded from membership in the church, and

Whereas recently, some Christian and world government leaders have promoted legislation that would require Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people to be imprisoned or killed solely for their sexual and gender identity, and

Whereas the growing number of people around the world condoning and participating in violent attacks and murder of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people often cite the Bible as a driving motivator and/or justification for their hate-filled actions.

Be it therefore resolved that we now must speak out, before God, the church and the world, to insist that this type discrimination and attack on the human and civil rights of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender brothers and sisters is immoral and contrary to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Be it further resolved that the North Carolina Annual Conference covenants to honor our United Methodist tradition of inclusiveness, protect the human and civil rights of all people, and stand against every form of discrimination in life of the church, the community and the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

Ryan Rowe, Member of Avent Ferry United Methodist

RESOLUTION 6

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Whereas: As United Methodists we are baptized and initiated into the body of Christ by water and the Spirit. Through the vows taken and renewed at every baptism, we accept the freedom and power God gives us to reject evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. In confession of Jesus Christ as our Savior we promise to serve him in union with people of all ages, nations, and races. (UMH 34)

Whereas: Scripture mandates that we welcome the stranger until we see the stranger as our neighbor. The Hebrew Bible tells us, "When strangers sojourn in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:34)

Whereas: The North Carolina Annual Conference 2006 approved the resolution Care for Immigrants advocating for the new immigrants.

Whereas: The Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church on May 2009 made public a Statement on the U.S. Immigration Situation advocating for a Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

Whereas: The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2009-2012 addresses on paragraph H) Rights for Immigrants:

We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and the struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all. (Social Principles 27)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Carolina Annual Conference of

Continued in next column

RESOLUTION 6 - continued

the United Methodist Church urges the President of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the President of the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. Secretary of State for the need to adopt a Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church calls to affirm and remind the church through the Council of Bishops, United Methodist Communications and the General Board of Church and Society, the position of The United Methodist Church regarding the rights of refugees, immigrants, and undocumented persons to seek a better life in the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church calls upon local churches to seek ways to welcome, assist, and empower the refugee, immigrant, visitors, and undocumented persons in their neighborhood, and to denounce the persecution of the sojourner in the United States as prejudicial and racist.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED to request that immediately upon adoption by the North Carolina Annual Conference 2010, the Secretary of the North Carolina Conference will send a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the President of the U.S. Senate, the U.S. Secretary of State, the North Carolina Governor, the North Carolina General Assembly and all the local United Methodist churches in its area.

Respectfully submitted by The Committee on Refugees and Immigration and The Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries North Carolina Conference, The United Methodist Church.

RESOLUTION 7

CONFERENCE HEALTHCARE INSURANCE AND ABORTION COVERAGE

WHEREAS American society and American politics have given an extraordinary amount of attention to healthcare over the last two years;

WHEREAS the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church maintains healthcare insurance with BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina (BCBS-NC);

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church has official moral teaching on abortion in its Social Principles (The Book of Discipline [BOD], 2008, Paragraph 161J, pp. 105-106);

WHEREAS United Methodists, as a church, officially hold "belief in the sanctity of unborn life [that] makes us reluctant to approve abortion," and "we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child" (BOD, 2008, Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS United Methodists, as a church, officially "cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control," "unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection," and "oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice" with exceptions (BOD, 2008, Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS the Social Principle on abortion represents "a call to faithfulness and [is] intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit" ("Preface" to the Social Principles, BOD, 2008, p. 97); as such, this Social Principle should, by assisting the North Carolina Conference to order and discipline our life together, increase our faithfulness to Jesus Christ and widen our witness to the world; and

WHEREAS there is reason to believe that the North Carolina Conference's current BCBS-NC healthcare insurance policy covers abortions that The United Methodist Church morally disapproves of;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, during the next year, the Insurance Committee will research the North Carolina Conference's BCBS-NC healthcare insurance policy to determine if the current policy's coverage is consistent with United Methodist moral teaching on abortion as stated in Paragraph 161J (BOD, 2008). If the current policy's coverage is found to be inconsistent with United Methodist moral teaching on abortion, then the Insurance Committee will attempt to negotiate with BCBS-NC a healthcare insurance policy, for the North Carolina Conference, that is consistent with United Methodist moral teaching on abortion. If such negotiation proves to be impossible, then the Insurance Committee will search for healthcare insurance policies for the conference that are consistent, or more consistent, with United Methodist moral teaching on abortion and present acceptable insurance policy proposals for 2012 (along with the BCBS-NC insurance policy proposal for 2012), for consideration, to the 2011 Session of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Respectfully submitted by: Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth
St. Peter's United Methodist Church/Morehead City, NC New Bern District

Results of voting on constitutional amendments announced by UM Council of Bishops

United Methodists meeting for the 2009 annual conference sessions voted on 32 proposed constitutional amendments to the Church's constitution. Members of the 62 U.S. annual conferences and the 73 conferences in Africa, Europe and Asia participated in the voting. In May 2010, the Council of Bishops announced that only five of 32 amendments to the constitution passed by the 2008 General Conference have been ratified by the annual conferences. The ratified amendments are effective immediately.

The process for amending the Constitution of The United Methodist Church requires a two-thirds majority vote of General Conference delegates. Annual conferences must then ratify the amendments by a two-thirds affirmative vote. The results of the voting are reported to the Council on Bishops, where they are verified and counted. The results are then reviewed and certified by the Council of Bishops.

Of the 32 amendments proposed in 2009, 23 of those (which were not ratified) were connected to a proposal from the Task Force on the Worldwide Nature of the Church, for the creation of regional conferences. Creation of these conferences would have established a uniform denominational structure including a U.S. regional conference. Several committees and study groups continue to examine ways to modify the church's structure to address the Church's worldwide nature.

The vote counts for each of the amendments were as follows:

Passed

Amendment VIII, adds "gender" to the list of categories ensuring the rights of membership regardless of race or status: passed 41,434 yes; 7,712 no

Amendment IX, which ensures every jurisdictional conference have at least 100 delegates: passed 39,333 yes; 9,122 no

Amendment XVII, which allows laity on the committee on investigation to vote on matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy: passed 33,810 yes; 14,712 no

Amendment XIX, which allows all clergy members of annual conference to vote to elect clergy delegates to general, jurisdictional or central conferences: passed 38,604 yes 10,432 no

Amendment XXII, which recognizes Bermuda congregations as part of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference: passed 43,049 yes; 5,539 no

Failed

Amendment I, which clarifies all people are eligible to attend worship services and receive the sacraments: 23,614 yes; 25,764 no

Amendment II, which requires all United Methodist organizations to adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies for members and employees: 32,413 yes; 16,596 no

Amendment III, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 21,126 yes; 28,218 no

Amendment IV, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 19,219 yes; 30,178 no

Amendment V, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,768 yes; 28,486 no

Amendment VI, allows newly established conferences be represented on a non-proportional basis for two quadrennia: 25,969 yes; 22,990 no

Amendment VII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,840 yes; 28,588 no

Amendment X, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 19,386 yes; 29,920 no

Amendment XI, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,711 yes; 28,539 no

Amendment XII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,825 yes; 28,568 no

Amendment XIII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 19,566 yes; 29,819 no

Amendment XIV, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,851 yes; 28,505 no

Amendment XV, which allows definition of the lay and clergy membership of the annual conference by the General Conference without going through the constitutional amendment process; 31,233 yes; 17,218 no

Amendment XVI, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,823 yes; 28,586 no

Amendment XVIII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,856 yes; 28,546 no

Amendment XX, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,639 yes; 28,653 no

Amendment XXI, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,921 yes; 28,425 no

Amendment XXIII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 19,184 yes; 30,185 no

Amendment XXIV, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,575 yes; 28,853 no

Amendment XXV, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,581 yes; 28,688 no

Amendment XXVI, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 19,277 yes; 30,061 no

Amendment XXVII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,711 yes; 28,657 no

Amendment XXVIII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,588 yes; 28,656 no

Amendment XXIX, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,652 yes; 28,703 no

Amendment XXX, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,584 yes; 28,703 no

Amendment XXXI, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,658 yes; 28,685 no

Amendment XXXII, which allows the General Conference to create new organizational structures for the worldwide church: 20,698 yes; 28,591 no

For More Information

For questions about the amendments may contact InfoServ, the denomination's official information service, at infoserv@umcom.org. Visit UMC.org to see the amendments in full.

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Five Rockingham District churches come together during Holy Week to support the Sandhills Children's Center

East Rockingham, Pee Dee, Philadelphia, West Rockingham, and Zion/Trinity United Methodist Churches gathered Sunday, March 27 through Friday, April 2 for nightly worship including Hand/ Foot washing on Maundy Thursday and closing with the Seven Last Words Service on Good Friday night.

Sunday through Thursday nights as the congregation prepared to receive the offering they were introduced to Lauren Faith, 18-month-old daughter of James and Lori Brigman, members of the East Rockingham church. Lauren Faith has multiple medical challenges and attends the Sandhills Children's center of

Rockingham. This school serves preschool children with developmental challenges. Like most non-profit agencies, the center has experienced budget cuts and need volunteers.

During their planning sessions for the Holy Week activities, pastors Ray Brooks (Zion/Trinity Charge) Donald Dawkins (West Rockingham), Dora Dorsey (Philadelphia), Vann Floyd (East Rockingham) and Mic Griffin (Pee Dee), decided to aid the Sandhills Children's Center by introducing worshippers to Lauren Faith, telling her story, encouraging the people to volunteer their time and to donate all monies from the weekly offering to the center.

On Friday, April 16, all five pastors met with Melanie Carnes, director of the Sandhills Children's Center of Rockingham, toured the center, learned its history and needs, and had the opportunity to meet many

of its children. The group donated checks totaling just over \$1,100.

"Another example of just how God works through Risk taking ministries and radical hospitality," said Rev. Griffin.



(L-R) Pastors Vann Floyd, Mic Griffin, Dora Dorsey, Ray Brooks and Donald Dawkins present a check to Sandhills Children's Center of Rockingham Director Melanie Carnes. During Holy Week, the offerings from five Rockingham District churches were given to support the center. The school serves preschool children with developmental challenges. In addition to giving to the offering, church members were encouraged to donate their time in support of the center.

Partners in Health and Wholeness certification encourages healthy choices for congregations

Five United Methodist Churches in the North Carolina Conference were among the first to receive the recognition in the Partners in Health and Wholeness Certification program. They are Edgerton Memorial in Selma, Galilee in Laurinburg, Oleander in Wilmington, Pleasant Green in Durham and University in Chapel Hill.

Congregations from across the state of North Carolina can obtain

special certification as a result of their efforts to improve the health of clergy and congregants.

By participating in the PHW Certification Program, congregations will be demonstrating that an individual's body is God's temple and that, as people of faith, congregants should strive to live an abundant life of health and wholeness by increasing their physical activity, eating more fruits and vegetables, reducing the impact of smoking on themselves and their neighbors, and engaging in other activities that have the potential to add years - abundant years - to the lives of participants.

To become a 2010 PHW Bronze Congregation and receive recognition from the North Carolina Council of Churches, a congregation should take the following three steps:

1. Identify a health contact person within the congregation to take the lead on organizing and/or promoting health programs and to serve as a point of contact for PHW staff
2. Designate all church buildings tobacco-free
3. Serve water and healthier food items, including fruits (with no added sugars) and vegetables (not fried), as an option at events

For information and procedures for verification of completion of the three activities, visit <http://www.nccouncilofchurches.org>.

Select programs and then Health & Wholeness. Verification can be submitted any time during 2010.

Additional tiers of PHW Certification will be announced soon.

BIRTH

Caleb Joseph Angel, son of Karen (BU: Bethel-Locust Hill) and Matt Angel was born April 14.

DEATH

THOMPSON, Neil H. (Raleigh: retired) died May 8. A memorial service was held on May 11, at Highland UMC.

MARRIAGE

Rev. Gene Tyson (RO: Hamlet Fellowship UMC) and Rev. Valerie Ballance (GR: Epworth-Fairfield Charge) were married on May 21 on Mattamuskeet Lake.

CLASSIFIEDS

FIRST UMC of Elon is seeking applicants for the position of Associate Pastor (non-appointive). Responsibilities include leadership in children's and youth ministry and spiritual formation for all ages. A Masters of Divinity from a United Methodist affiliated seminary is preferred. This is a full time position but consideration may be given to seminary students who will complete their graduate degree within one year. For more information, contact Terry Huffines (336-584-5263). Send résumés to First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 923, Elon, NC 27244 or email to fumcelonrev@bellsouth.net. Résumés will be received until June 19.

WANTED: Children's Program Coordinator, First United Methodist Church in Morehead City is seeking a Children's Program Coordinator, full or part-time. Please e-mail resume to wwalker3@ec.rr.com or call 252-726-7102.

KITCHEN equipment for sale. 2-door commercial refrigerator, 2-door commercial freezer; grill, deep-fat fryer, 2-burner stove. Can be seen at the Methodist Building. Call Shirley at 919-832-9560, ext. 239.

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EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

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adult JULY BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

July 4, 2010

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
"God's Cosmic Plan"

Any time the Fourth of July falls on a Sunday, those of us in the United States may want to ponder issues such as church and state relations, the connection (or not) between patriotism and spirituality, and memories of pivotal moments in our national history.

Those are worthy topics for our conversation.

But this week's study text in the International Lesson series offers a subtle—well, maybe not very subtle!—reminder that God's ultimate will is beyond that represented in any government.

The phrase quoted in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 ("When they say, 'peace and security...'" was the slogan of the Roman empire: "*Pax et securitas*." Words like that often appeared on the coins of the realm.

But Paul is clear that God's sudden judgment can put a quick end to the seeming primacy of the Roman imperial proclamations.

The church at Thessalonica expected the return of the Lord would come soon.

[Remember that in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle had to warn some of the faithful "not to quit their day job"—my paraphrase!—just because they thought Jesus was about to come back (2 Thessalonians 3:6-14).]

The Thessalonians worried about when Jesus would come back (1 Thessalonians 5:1).

They worried that friends and family who had already died might miss out on the victory of Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

They worried about how to get along with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:12-15).

Paul puts all of this worrying—about government, about Christ's return, about church life—into a comforting perspective: "For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

The word translated "destined" in the New Revised Standard Version and translated "appointed" in the New International Version (and in the King James Version) is a Greek word that in its basic form means "to place something or someone."

Paul's good news is that we have been *placed* by God for obtaining salvation.

In Christ Jesus, God has put us where salvation is available.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Rationality of Faith* (Scribners), Carl Michalson wrote "When the early church prayed for (Jesus) coming, they did right to say, 'Marana tha'—'our Lord come!' For the verb is expressed in the present imperative, and could very well mean, 'Keep on coming!' 'O do not set him a time!'" plead John Wesley, 'Expect him every hour. Now he is nigh! Even at the door!'"

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin, "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the promise of Your return. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the promise of our salvation. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the tomorrow where You will meet us, love us, claim us..."

July 11, 2010

Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12
"Glory to Christ"

Let me be honest with you. There is much in this week's study text that does not make a lot of sense for me. I don't get it.

What about righteous judgment to make us worthy of the kingdom (2 Thessalonians 1:5)?

What about God's afflicting and then turning around and to give relief to the afflicted (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)?

What about eternal destruction of those who do not know God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)?

I'm not the first to wonder about these verses. In the early fourth century, Ephrem the Syrian wrote this commentary on this Thessalonian letter, "But why instead of a stern reproof did our Lord speak a parable

of persuasion to that Pharisee (in Luke 18:9-14)? He spoke the parable to him tenderly...so our Lord did not oppose him harshly, that he might not give occasion to the rebellious to rebel again...Our Lord, then, did not employ harsh reproof, because his coming was of grace." (Quoted from *Ancient Christian Commentary, Volume IX*)

Of course, my problem with this week's texts might well be not so much that I do not understand, but that I understand all too well.

There is a tone of threat.

There is the push of judgment.

There is the clamp of punishment.

None of this is what I want to hear!

The inner tensions of these verses find some resolution in 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

In that verse, Paul acknowledges that it is God who makes us worthy; that it is God who brings our good intentions into good actions; it is God who fulfills the work of faith.

Finally, it is all about grace.

All of this brings me to the Bradford pear. (Stick with me now!)

Do you remember how the green and flowering of spring began a few months ago?

Before the dogwood blossomed and before the elm regained its leaf, the Bradford pear burst forth in full array. The Bradford pear signals what is to come.

The Church is called to be a Bradford pear for the world, to show by our lives (by our blooming) what is God's promise and hope for all the world.

The Church is to show the world what the reign of God will look like: peace, justice, joy—all the fruits of the Spirit. And that is the gift God wants to give the Thessalonian Christians and the gift that God wants to give us today.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In the foreword to *The Shack*, William P. Young wrote, "I suppose that since most of our hurts come through relationships so will be our healing, and I know that grace rarely makes sense for those looking in from the outside."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your

prayer begin: "Gracious God—full of grace..."

July 18, 2010

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
"Chosen and Called"

In "Fiddler on the Roof," once Tevye starts singing about tradition, others join in, each one describing tradition from his or her perspective: papas, mamas, sons, daughters.

(Okay. You can't hear me but I have been bellowing those lyrics. Sorry you missed it.)

Papas: "Scrambling for a living." Mamas: keeping a Kosher home. Sons: waiting to meet the bride picked out for him. Daughters: taught to mend and tend and fix.

What seems clear is that the tradition of the Hebrew community touches each one of them, albeit each one in a different way.

Tradition.

In my childhood home, gifts brought by Santa were left unwrapped in each one's designated spot. (We moved to East Third Street; my spot was the piano bench.) In other homes, Santa wrapped presents that he brought and placed them carefully under the tree.

Tradition.

In the Bethany (Durham) church history, the first reference to stews to raise funds is in the accounts of the mid 1940's.

There is a designated stew hut now, complete with gas-fired pots and something of a recipe penciled on the wall.

Twice a year, the members and friends fire up the pots, chop and peel and stir for hours. (The result is delicious.) Setting the date for the semi-annual stew has something to do with the full moon, although its computation is beyond me.

Tradition.

So, when Paul advises the Thessalonians to "stand firm and hold fast to the traditions", the apostle is playing a tune that we recognize. We know tradition...or do we?

One clue that nailing down biblical tradition is not so simple is the variety of ways that the word rendered

July adult Bible study

continued from page 24

"traditions" (*paradidōmi*) has been translated.

NRSV...traditions. NIV...teachings. ENT...instructions. Moffat...rules. El Nuevo...doctrine. Version Synodale...education. TEV...truths. Living Bible...truth.

The word *paradidōmi* comes from two words, one meaning "come alongside" and the other "to give away."

That is what tradition is: it brings to us (comes alongside us) something that another is passing on (giving away).

What has belonged to another generation has been given to us, in the words of Paul, "to hold fast" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

And we hold the gift only so we can pass it on. And what is the gift? Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17. Praise God!

What Someone Else Has Said:

Harvey Cox has written (*The Future of Faith*, Harper One) "The past...is not forgotten; it is not even past. Our past shackles us, especially when we don't realize it. But it can also liberate us."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "For those before us, thanks..."

July 25, 2010

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-15
"God's Own Faithfulness"

Occasionally, in this day of ubiquitous cell phones, we get the, uh, benefit of hearing half of a conversation.

For example, standing in the aisle of the grocery store, I might hear a man say into his mobile phone: "They don't have kumquats; is it okay if I buy raspberries instead?"

(I am left to wonder what this culinary project might be.)

Or, as I once overheard while waiting in the security line at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport: "If he does that again, you really ought to get another one."

(Another what—Another dog? Another husband? Another washing machine?)

Hearing only half of a dialogue can leave us mystified as to what is going on.

Enter 2 Thessalonians, third chapter. Paul, Silvanus, and Timo-

thy—the writers of this letter—seem concerned that "wicked and evil people" are tampering with their ministry; we are left to wonder who and how (2 Thessalonians 3:2).

The trio has considerable to say about persons among the Thessalonians who do not work; we are left to wonder who these people are and why they might be idle (2 Thessalonians 3:11).

In closing out the correspondence, the apostles insist that faithful ones have nothing to do with disobedient ones, but to treat them as family; we are left to wonder how to follow both of these instructions at the same time (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15).

In the case of an overheard cell phone conversation, we might be at peace, knowing that it is none of our business.

But, how can we be a faithful people if we do not know what is happening in the biblical setting?

There is one constant, one reality that can cut through some of this dilemma: the Lord is faithful (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

In the final analysis, our commitment is not based on our ability to understand; it is rooted in the faithfulness of God.

God is faithful even when we get it wrong.

God is faithful even when we miss the point.

God is faithful even when we are not.

"Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be." (Thomas Chisholm, hymn 140, *The United Methodist Hymnal*)

What Someone Else Has Said:

Wil I. Jackson (retired elder in the North Carolina Conference), penned these words (*The Rope of Faith*, Authorhouse): "Truthfully, God does not love us more—or less—at the particular moment of our felt need than He did before we incurred disease, disaster, or death. Nor will He love us more in the future...He loves us perfectly, wholly, and completely—and that love is steadfast, reliable, and unchanging."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "For this 'now,' I give You thanks..."

conference CALENDAR

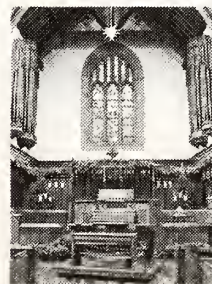
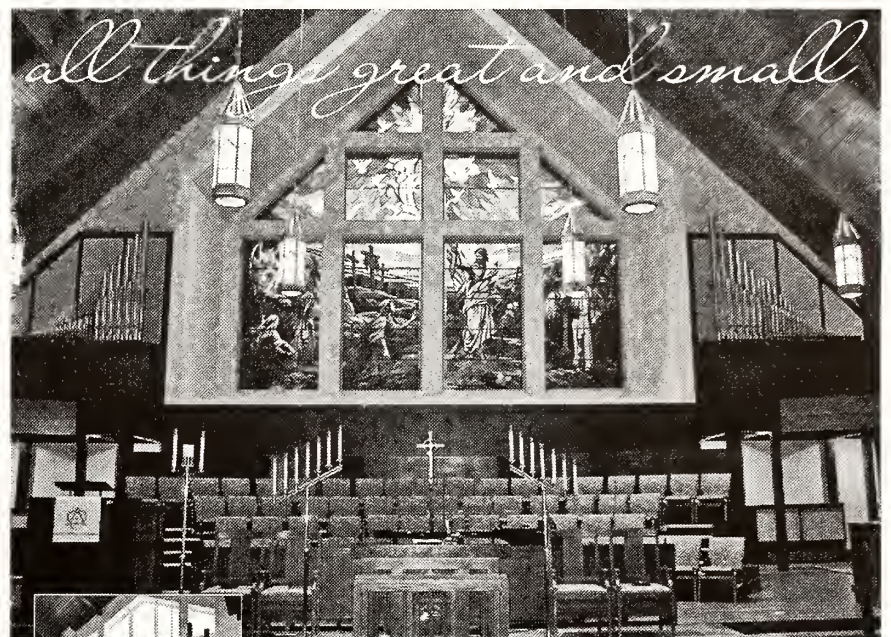
June

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|-------|--|-------|--|
| 2 | Newgate Prison Ministry Workshop, 9am - 1pm, Orange Correctional Facility, Hillsborough | 22 | Moving Day for Pastors changing appointments |
| 6 | Conference Headquarters Dedication, 3pm; 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner; Tours offered after the service | 24 | New Pastor Orientation, Garner UMC |
| 10-12 | Annual Conference, Greenville | 24-27 | UMW South Atlantic Regional School, Ferrum College, Ferrum, VA |
| 20-25 | Fellowship of United Methodists Music & Worship Arts Week, Lake Junaluska | 27 | First Sunday in new pulpits for pastors changing appointments |
| 21-25 | Summer Breakaway for Youth, Louisburg College | | |
| 21-25 | UM Building closed for | | |

July

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 10-17 | Appalachian Trail Hike for Youth |
| 19-24 | Annual Conference Session for Youth (ACS) |
| 21-24 | UMW School of Christian Mission |

NC Conference events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar



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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Apply for Mission Seed Funds

The NC Conference Mission Team is receiving applications for a second round of Mission Seed Funds for 2010. Applications are due no later than Aug. 2. Funds will be disbursed by Sept. 15. Seed Funds are to be used to develop and start new ministries or make significant changes or additions to on-going ministries. Application guidelines and downloads are available at <http://nccumc.org/missions/seed-funds-advance/mission-seed-funds/>.

Bishop Gwinn speaking at Clergy Breakfast on immigration

This year, the NC Council of Churches is continuing its successful statewide series of "Clergy Breakfasts" on immigration. These events are for faith leaders and provide an overview of immigration issues. Three sessions will be held within the North Carolina Conference geographic area: June 8 - United Church of Chapel Hill in Chapel Hill; June 15 - Camp Ground UMC in Fayetteville; and July 1 - Fairmont UMC in Raleigh. The speakers for the July 1 breakfast include Bishop Al Gwinn and Rev. Ismael Ruiz-Millan, pastor at Unidos por Cristo UMC in Grimesland. For more information, call 919-828-6501 or see www.welcometheimmigrant.org.

Convocation on Rural Church

Pastors of rural churches that are eligible for Duke Endowment grants are invited to make plans to attend Duke Divinity School's 2010 Convocation on the Rural Church: The Grace of Rural Ministry. This event will be held Aug. 23-25 at the Embassy Suites Ocean-Front Hotel in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Using support from the Duke Endowment, costs will be kept to a minimum. Online registration is now open at <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/learningforlife/programs/seminars/rural>.

North Carolina Conference Historical Society Workshop

The NC Conference Archives and History Commission and Historical Society are sponsoring a workshop that will provide teaching and learning for gathering oral histories and employing media to preserve local church history on October 2 at First UMC, Wilson, from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Excellent leadership will help participants use formats and technologies to collect and store sacred memories. A box lunch is the only cost (free will offering) for this professional training experience. Please register with Robin Harry at rharry@nccumc.org. Church historians and their guests (including media-savvy youth) are encouraged to attend.

Youth 2011 event website launches

A website kicking off Youth 2011, next year's national youth gathering for The United Methodist Church, is now online with information and links about the quadrennial event sponsored by Young People's Ministries, a division of The General Board of Discipleship. For the first time, the four-day conference in July 2011 will be held twice on opposite sides of the country to better serve the denomination. The event theme is "More Than," and the youth participants will be shown that with the presence of God they can be "more than" just ordinary. The launch of www.youth2011.org provides a gateway to this event for youth and their leaders. Youth 2011 will be held at Purdue University in West Lafayette on July 13-17 and at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento on July 27-31.

DISCIPLE study trainings scheduled

The Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, in partnership with The Duke Endowment, will offer two free trainings for NC Conference leaders of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP in September. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call 336-454-5348.

Early Response Trainer Training

Natural disasters happen. It's not if, but when. The North Carolina Conference is in need of UMCOR Early Response trained personnel. To help alleviate this need, MERCI Center is hosting training sessions to increase the level of preparedness. Basic Early Response Trainer Training will be July 23-24. Call Bill Gross at 919-720-1484 with questions and registration for this event.

2010 African-American Women's Leadership Conference

On August 5-7, Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center will host "The Strong Black Woman - a Gentle Force for God," an African-American Women's Leadership Conference. Lay and clergy African-American women are welcome to attend. Participants will discuss life issues such as health, spirituality and family from a distinctively African-American female perspective and share approaches to assist in dealing with the relevant issues in their lives and the impact being grounded in their faith can have upon these issues.

Conference speakers include African-American women who have been influential in the church and other venues, including Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes of Durham. More information about the conference, including speaker biographies, schedule, and registration information can be found at <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/african-american-women/>, or by calling Pam Naplen at 828-454-6656. Register by June 12 and take advantage of the early registration fee of only \$129. After June 12, the cost is \$159.

Robeson County Church and Community Center invites work teams

The Church and Community Center, serving the one of the most impoverished counties in our state, has openings for summer work teams. The Church and Community Center is also a general advance of the UMC. To schedule a mission work team placement, please call Jim Kennedy at 910-738-5204. Also continue to support this critical ministry and if possible, make a gift now. Please mail your check directly to the Church and Community Center at: Robeson County Church and Community Center, 600 West 5th St., Lumberton, NC 28358 or make a donation through a local United Methodist church. Please note on the check: Robeson County Church and Community Center - Advance #791742. For more information please contact 910-738-5204, or email rcchhousing@ncrrbiz.com.

Conference Media Center survey

The new Conference Media Center Associate, Laura Dallas, would like to know more about local churches' wants and needs for the Media Center at the new building. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey: <http://is.gd/bYZph>.

Mandatory sexual ethics training

All clergy under episcopal appointment are required to attend sexual ethics training in 2010. These mandatory trainings will be held across the Conference this fall. While they are scheduled around district clusters, any clergyperson may attend any training, but all clergy must attend at least one. Facilitators from the Methodist Home for Children will lead the training.

Retired clergy not serving in an appointed position are not required to attend but they are welcome.

Sign-in will be required. Each training will begin at 10 a.m. and last until 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

- Sept. 27: at St. Luke: Sanford (Burlington, Durham, Sanford Districts)
- Oct. 4: at Centenary: Smithfield (Goldsboro, Raleigh, Rocky Mount Districts)
- Oct. 21: at First: Laurinburg (Fayetteville, Rockingham, Wilmington Districts)
- Oct. 25: at St. James: Greenville (Elizabeth City, Greenville, New Bern Districts)
- Nov. 4: TBA in Raleigh (Make-up day at locations)

Around the CONFERENCE

Western NC Conference Bishop Goodpaster installed as president of UM Council of Bishops

By David Briggs *

A former Mississippi pastor who is committed to engaging United Methodists in hands-on mission took office May 7 as president of the denomination's Council of Bishops.

The council comprises The United Methodist Church's top clergy leaders, who guide the 11.5 million-member denomination in Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States.

Bishop Gregory Palmer, outgoing leader, handed the presidential gavel over to Bishop Larry Goodpaster with the words, "May you direct and assist us in the building up of God's work."

Goodpaster, spiritual leader of the Western NC Conference, promised to fulfill the office "for the glory of God and for the transformation of the world."

In an interview, Goodpaster said he is ready to assume the office. "I want to be where God wants me to be," he said. "I want to be available. I want to trust God."



Goodpaster

He was elected a bishop in 2000 and appointed to the Alabama-West Florida Conference. He was appointed to the Western NC Conference in 2008. Goodpaster also provides oversight to the church in Vietnam.

During his two-year term, the new president will face several issues, including an effort to establish structures that more fully reflect the growth of the church overseas and efforts to revive a declining and graying membership in the United States.

Goodpaster said he wants to play a role in bringing the church together in mission.

In particular, the bishop said, he wants to embed the denomination's four areas of focus (leadership development, congregational growth, global health and ministry with people in poverty) into the life of the church and to continue informal conversations among several groups looking at the church's future.

* David Briggs is news editor of UM News Service in Nashville, TN.



Jerusalem UMC - Fruit of the Spirit Banquet

Jerusalem UMC, Laurinburg, held its first Fruit of the Spirit Banquet on April 24 at the Highlands in Laurinburg. More than 200 people were in attendance. The nationally renowned Peay Brothers, Majid, Taimine, Katif and Solomon, originally of Rowland, were the guests ministering music for the occasion.

Joyce Peay was the guest speaker and introduced her sons, by sharing the family's testimony of how she reared the four young men by keeping them focused on the call that God had for their lives, through love, discipline and encouragement. She shared that she had to depend upon God and family to keep her sons on track, after their father died suddenly when the youngest was only two months old.

All four of the young men are college graduates, and one is presently pursuing his doctorate degree. The Peay Brothers gained national attention when they finished second on CBS's The Early Show's Family Face Off in 2009. Although they did not win the face-off, they were still given a recording contract.

Jerusalem UMC and their pastor, Rev. Gypsie Murdaugh were excited to host this event that not only allowed the young men to return home and share their gift of music, but to inspire the youth in attendance to never give up on their dreams. Youth of the church served as hosts and hostesses for the evening.



Wesley Memorial UMC - Confirmation Class

Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington was blessed with a wonderful 2010 Confirmation class of 19 young men and women and adult mentors. The class met weekly for six weeks plus a spirit-filled weekend retreat, which was originally planned to begin the class experience in the Uwharrie National Forrest, but due to snow, was canceled, and ended up as a beach retreat culminating the time together. Wesley Memorial UMC was blessed to receive these young folks into the life of the church and looks forward to their growing spiritual journey.



Carrboro UMC - Centennial Celebration

As a part of the Centennial Celebration of Carrboro United Methodist Church on Sunday, May 9, an historic play was presented during the morning worship service. Written and directed by Terry Bailey, the play depicted the history of Carrboro as well as the Carrboro United Methodist Church in an interesting, light-hearted way. Members of the cast are pictured above.

Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

ZOE Ministry HopeWalk event connects youth in Kenya with youth in Wilmington District to support Giving Hope Project

Through a pilot program with ZOE Ministry, youth from the Wilmington District gathered at Wesley Memorial UMC for a district-wide lock-in last winter.

The HopeWalk event drew over 150 youth and adults in the U.S. who were connected through live video feeds to 100 orphan youth in Kenya who were completing a 10K walk.

The orphans were raising the money needed to bring 100 new orphan families into ZOE's Giving Hope Empowerment Project which teaches the orphans essential life skills so that they live lives of self-sufficiency and dignity.

In the wee hours of the night Eastern Standard time, 100 orphans walked through their village in Kenya. The youth in the Wilmington joined for a sleep-deprived event with fellowship, music, and skits.

Prior to the event, the Wilmington youth were challenged to find monthly sponsors to support new Giving Hope program participants. It takes \$360 to support an orphan family for one year in the program, and typically participants are in the program for about three years.

Wilmington's youth surpassed their goal and raised well over \$36,000. Because of the successful pilot program, the rest of the districts in the NC Conference and across the country are invited to sponsor a HopeWalk event in December 2010. The goal for 2010 is to raise sponsorships supporting at least 1,200 children for their time in the program. For more information, email info@zoeministry.org or visit www.zoeministry.org/hopewalk.



At a lock-in hosted by Wesley Memorial UMC, Wilmington District youth gathered for a sleep-deprived event with fellowship, music, and skits. During the lock-in the youth were connected by live video feed to orphans in Kenya who were completing a 10K walk to raise money to sponsor 100 orphans in ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Empowerment Project.

Connect with God and the outdoors at camp

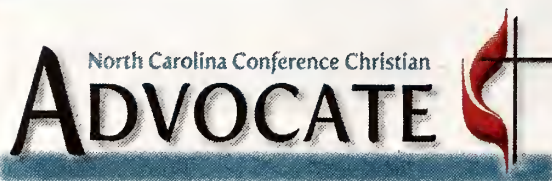
Summer camp begins this month at the three NC Conference camps: Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish.

Registration for sessions throughout the summer is in process, and there are still some spots open for children, youth and entire families to register. There are Adventure Camps, Horse Camps, and Mountain Bike Camps. There are Family Camps, Day Camps and Night Owl Camps. And, there are Sailing Camps, Marine Science Camps and Leadership Development Camps.

In addition, there is the opportunity to build life-long relationships with others and with Jesus Christ.

A 50% discount is available for children of pastors in the conference who attend any regular one-week camp program at Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee or Rockfish.

For more information on registering for camp, go to: www.ncumcamps.org.



The Advocate features people from the NC Conference doing God's work in the world.

- ✓ People from **your churches**
- ✓ People from **your district**
- ✓ People from **your conference**
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African Children's Choir



Opening the Friday night laity event, the African Children's Choir shared their energy and musical talents with conference members. Most of the 30 children in the group have lost one or both parents to poverty or disease. The children trained at the choir's training academy in Kampala, Uganda for five months before beginning their tour. The choir shared a variety of songs including "Here I Am to Worship," "This Little Light of Mine" and "O Happy Day." (Photo by Bill Norton)



Enter the Holy Spirit: Tintinnabulum

Seen in the processional marches at the start of worship at Annual Conference was a Tintinnabulum (or 'tinkling bell') which consists of a cross-shaped pole with small bells suspended by colored ribbons at various lengths. Many churches today use the Tintinnabulum in procession on festival days like Palm Sunday, Easter, Christmas, All Saints, to represent the Holy Spirit and the Communion of Saints.

Bells were used in the early church to signify the presence of the Holy Spirit. Even today the "Sanctus" bells are rung in highly liturgical services during the consecration of the elements. Small cup-shaped bells or cymbala were used in procession. Earliest forms had the bells suspended in a row above the performer and struck with hammers; the earliest musical instruments in the church were bells, positive organs, harps, flutes, wind instruments, etc. and regulated by liturgical custom, and began as early as the 6th century. During Medieval times, bells were used during the singing of Ordinary of the Mass like the Gloria or Sanctus and to accompany plainsong hymns. A Tintinnabulum has also been used to signal the arrival of the pope and consisted of a single bell suspended on a pole. (Photo by Bill Norton)

— By Dr. William J. Weissner, Minister of Music, Edenton Street UMC, Raleigh, and chair of the Conference Worship Committee



Leading worship

Lucy Lincoln and the Rev. Joyce Day served as liturgists during the Service of Commissioning and Ordination on Saturday morning. (Photos by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

On the Cover

(Top to bottom)

(L) An African Children's Choir coordinator shares about the program with conference members.

(R) Hannah McMillan, conference youth president, delivers the Conference Youth Laity Address.

Lay and clergy members of annual conference discuss a series of questions posed by Bishop Gwinn.

Volunteers package meals for Stop Hunger Now service event.

The Rev. Jay Locklear leads the music during opening worship.

Ann Davis, UMW President, leads the conference in a humorous scripturally-based stretch break.

Dr. Richard Hays delivers the sermon during opening worship.

All cover photos by Bill Norton and Reggie Ponder, Jr.



Lift every voice and sing

At Thursday morning's worship, the congregation sang the traditional opening hymn, "And Are We Yet Alive." Pictured above (L-R) the Rev. Rhonda Maurer, Bunn Hill-King Charge; Melba McCallum, Rockingham District; Sara Cameron, Wilmington District; and Vermel Taylor, Rockingham District. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Denominational statistics from across the US show NCC as one of four conferences reporting growth

By Heather Hahn *

(UMNS) United Methodists across the United States rejoiced to see old friends and celebrate their shared faith at annual conference gatherings this spring and summer. But when the time came for reports on membership and attendance, the news was often sobering.

The pews at many U.S. churches are emptier this year.

In statistical reports from 39 U.S. conferences, most disclosed declines in membership, worship attendance or church-school participation in 2009. Twenty-six conferences reported losses in all three categories. Thirteen reported membership drops of more than 2 percent.

Only four conferences, including the North Carolina Conference, gained members.

The 2009 figures continue a decades-long decline in U.S. membership.

"What we're dealing with is the legacy of what we haven't done in the past," said San Francisco Area Bishop Warner H. Brown Jr., who oversees the California-Nevada Annual (regional) Conference. "What we're doing is addressing the main purpose of the church, which is making disciples."

Worldwide growth

The situation in the U.S. does not carry over to the global church. Worldwide, The United Method-

ist Church is growing. In the decade between 1998 and 2008, for example, overall membership grew by 14 percent for those who come into membership by profession of faith and 27 percent for baptized members.

At the end of 2008, the church had approximately 11 million professing members and an additional 2.5 million baptized members in

Africa, Europe, the United States and the Philippines.

Four U.S. conferences grow

Four annual conferences reported increases in membership, and five conferences reported increases in worship attendance.

The Red Bird Missionary Conference in Kentucky noted that its mem-

bership stands at 1,495, up seven members, and its average worship attendance of 711 is up 35.

The North Carolina Annual (regional) Conference so far is the only other conference to also report gains in membership and attendance. Membership increased by

See "UM statistics," page 19



Members of the North Carolina Annual Conference clap during an exercise break session. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Worshipful work of Annual Conference is streamlined, reorganized, shorter

By Bill Norton *

The theme of the North Carolina Annual Conference, which met June 10-12 in Greenville, was "A Future with Hope...Living for Jesus."

Meeting one day less than previous years raised questions as to whether all business could be completed and whether there would be a cost saving.

To accomplish the work in less time, several services of worship were combined and some items of business were presented together.

All Saints

The conference began with the combined Service of Holy Communion and All Saints Celebration. Dr. Richard Hays, interim dean at Duke Divinity School, delivered the opening worship sermon.

Twenty-nine clergy and spouses who have died since the last conference were remembered during the service. Early in the afternoon busi-

ness session, 29 retiring clergy were recognized.

All financial reports presented together

All matters related to the budget were presented and discussed during the first day of conference and presented for final vote on the second day. In the previous years, some items were presented on different days, often making it difficult for members to visualize how all line items impact the overall budget.

An overview of the financial status in the denomination and the impact budget items have on the local church was presented by Christine Dodson, conference treasurer.

For the seventh year, the Insurance Committee reported that health insurance premiums, benefits and eligibility would remain the same. This was attributed to an increase in wellness and preventive care and claims being lower than anticipated. The committee cautioned the confer-

ence that an increase would likely be proposed next year.

The approved conference budget was \$20,345,625, an increase of \$69,426 or 0.34%. Included in the finance report was a salary of \$101,994 for district superintendents, a \$639 per service year rate for retired clergy, and no change in minimum salary.

Reorganized agenda

Rather than presenting awards through out the conference, all awards, along with the State of the Church Address, were presented the first evening.

Resident Bishop Al Gwinn presided during the Conference, delivered the State of the Church address. (See page 7 for an article on the Bishop's address.)

During the dinner break on the first day of conference, members packaged about 20,000 meals for

See "Worshipful work," page 10

NC Annual Conference 2009 Stats

- ◆ Membership stands at 237,495, up 5 from the previous year.
- ◆ Worship attendance: at 83,452, up 400.
- ◆ Church school attendance: 37,300, down 1,545.
- ◆ Received on Profession of Faith or Restored: 3,011.
- ◆ Number of persons baptized (all ages): 2,505.
- ◆ Membership in chartered United Methodist Men: 10,007, up 532.
- ◆ Membership in United Methodist Women: 20,998, up 279.

Resolutions approved addressing discrimination, immigration reform, and human trafficking

By Taylor Mills *

Seven resolutions were before the members of 2010 Annual Conference. The Committee on Resolutions, led by the Rev. Alan Swartz, presented the Resolutions. Members approved three of the resolutions: stopping human trafficking in North Carolina, non-discrimination towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals; and endorsement of Comprehensive Immigration Reform nationally.

Bishop Gwinn ruled Resolutions 1, 2, 3 and 7 to be out of order because they would change the policy of the Annual Conference. Such a change in policy would need to be made in the form of a motion, not a resolution.

Resolutions 1 and 2 related to the role of District Superintendents with regards to the professions of faith in our Conference. Resolutions 3 and 7 addressed Conference medical insurance.

The Committee recommended to the Conference concurrence with Resolutions 4, 5, and 6. All three were approved.



Alan Swartz (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

Resolution 4 dealt with human trafficking in North Carolina and was approved unchanged.

Resolution 5 called for the Conference to speak out against discrimination and hate crimes against Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender people. With wording changes to clarify how the resolution relates to ministry in the local church, the resolution was approved.

Approved after few changes were made, Resolution 6 called for comprehensive immigration reform. The changes clarified

wording and added an amendment to include the immigration policies of other nations.

Full text of all approved resolutions is available at <http://nccumc.org/annual-conference-2010/#video> in the Documents section.

* Taylor Mills is pastor of Trinity UMC in Durham, chair of the Conference Communications Committee and served as editor of the daily Saddlebag publication at Annual Conference.



Members of annual conference were invited to bring their offerings for the Central Conference Pension Initiative forward to be placed in baskets as part of the opening worship service. The initiative addresses the challenges faced by approximately 2,500 retired pastors, lay workers and surviving spouses in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe who receive little or no pension income following their years of dedication to the Church. Most are struggling to survive—growing their own food, relying on their children, forgoing health care, and creating products to sell. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Special offerings support worldwide ministry

Three offerings were received during Annual Conference 2010 to support local and international ministries.

- ♦ The Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) offering was taken during the Opening Worship Service and All Saints Celebration. The initiative is a long-term solution to provide financial security for dedicated church leaders and surviving spouses in the Central Conferences of the denomination (there are 62 conferences located outside the United States). The NC Conference offering raised \$352,866.16 in total pledges and \$47,794.64 in cash and checks. Since 2000, gifts supporting CCPI have been given throughout the denomination, and as of the end of June 2010, an initial goal of \$20 million was reached. More information can be found at www.ccpi-umc.org.
- ♦ The Stamp Out Malaria/Nothing But Nets offering was received Thursday evening. Nothing But Nets™ is a global, grassroots campaign to save lives by preventing malaria, a leading killer of children in Africa. A donation of \$10 for the purchase of an anti-malaria bed net and training in its use can save a life. The nets purchased and distributed by Nothing But Nets™ are long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets approved by the UN World Health Organization (WHO) for safety, quality, and efficacy. These standards ensure that the children and families sleeping under these bed nets won't get sick from the insecticide woven into the fabric of the net. More information can be found at www.nothingbutnets.net. The NC Conference offering raised a total of \$7,933.15.
- ♦ The Laity Ministries offering was taken on Friday evening. Overseen by the Board of Laity, this fund supports the Laity Celebration event and other programs for laity. The offering was \$5,018.92.

Notice of publishing schedule change

The July and August editions of the *NC Conference Christian Advocate* are combined into this issue. This is due to the relocation of the NC Conference headquarters from Raleigh to Garner in late June following Annual Conference. In September, monthly issues resume.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

Living for Jesus

During and after the Annual Conference session, mission projects were scheduled. The Conference Planning Team considered the opportunity a good way to say thank you to the Greenville community for the four years of hospitality the conference has received at the Greenville Convention Center.

"In restaurants, coffee shops, the University Housing and in the hotels, we received courtesy and care, and in one afternoon, we gave a little back," said one of the volunteers.

Thursday evening, volunteers packed meals for Stop Hunger Now's Operation Sharehouse program. Saturday afternoon, volunteers worked on a community project in Greenville and at the Wesley Student Center at East Carolina University.

Volunteers complete Saturday afternoon projects

Following the adjournment of the Annual Conference session on Saturday, June 12, volunteers changed into their work clothes and gloves. The work of Christian hospitality and service was carried out in 100 degree heat with warm hearts and smiling faces.

At the home of a handicapped resident, a group of volunteers including Bishop Al Gwinn drove nails into a ramp. The ramp originally was built by Shepherd's Helpers, a mission of Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville. The nails that were used in the structure had to be replaced with galvanized nails and screws to assure the longevity of the ramp. The Conference volunteers pounded for about 2 hours and finished the project.

The Wesley Student Center at the ECU campus got a fresh coat of paint on exterior trim and inside in the common areas and a bedroom. The student center is one of the Wesley

Foundation Campus Ministries supported by the NC Conference. The Rev. Scott Wilkinson selected the paint and invited the volunteers to have fun with the bright purple in the stairwells. The ECU Pirates wear bold purple and gold, and the choice of color was good for the heavily trafficked area in the student facility.

Cindy Shetter, of Rock Creek UMC, Graham, was one of the painters, and she said it was "invigorating, a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon."

In both settings, the fellowship among the volunteers was energizing. Carol Goehring, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, worked at the Wesley Student Center alongside a couple of young adults.

"They knew how to transform a room with paint and with their eagerness to make a difference for the students who frequent the center. Theirs is a selfless generation in many ways, and it was a joy to work with them," she said.



At the home of a handicapped resident, a group of volunteers including Bishop Al Gwinn (second from left) drove replaced nails in a ramp.



The Rev. Beth Hood, Greenville District superintendent and Kerry Vitkus, pastor of Mt. Carmel UMC in the Durham District, work together on the meal packaging project. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

20,000 meals packaged by volunteers on Thursday eve

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. *

Some 110 volunteers packed a room set up for 70 to help Stop Hunger Now package 20,000 meals during the 2010 annual conference in Greenville.

During the supper break on June 10, a room in the Hilton adjacent to the convention center was used by volunteers to package a nutritious soup mix for shipment somewhere in the world where hungry people need it. The food packaging and shipment is part of Stop Hunger Now's Operation Sharehouse program.

It was the first time during the NC Annual Conference that Stop Hunger Now provided the contents for packaged meals. Previous annual conference meal packaging events have been held in Mississippi, and one is planned this year in North Georgia.

For every 1,000 meals during the event, a gong would sound.

"It's just something fun," explained the Rev. Steve Hickle, pastor of Fairmont UMC in Raleigh and a veteran volunteer with Stop Hunger Now. "It's great to be able to make those meals and whack that gong."

Prior to the devastating earthquake in Haiti, Stop Hunger Now had shipped about six million meals to Haiti that were stored in a facility that wasn't damaged in the quake. In a "grace moment" for those reeling from the earthquake, that food was immediately available to feed people, Hickle noted.

Leonidas Haywood, a lay member from Wilson Temple UMC in Raleigh, got caught up in the excitement when he saw signs about the event, even though he wasn't exactly sure at first what it was all about.

"So I put on a blue hat, I went in and I got busy," Haywood said. The

hat he referred to was the blue hairnet all volunteers were required to wear as they worked.

"It was the best part of conference to me," Haywood said. "I enjoyed it, especially since it will be feeding children. I hope they will do it annually, and I hope that next year they will do it maybe on a larger scale. It's things like this that get my heart going. This is exciting to me." He added, "The camaraderie is great."

Steve Taylor, the Conference's outreach team coordinator, said the missions team wanted service projects at conference that could be completed on-site in a relatively brief time. "It's coming out of the mission team seeking to be about God's business in the world," Taylor said, adding that it was "utter joy" to see so many volunteers turn out for the project.

"It's wild and wonderful chaos and the Spirit is just flowing," Taylor said.

Rick Kearney, program coordinator with Stop Hunger Now's Operation Sharehouse program, also commented on the joyous chaos of the volunteer effort. "Chaos is just an over-abundance of enthusiasm in one small space," Kearney said.

He explained to the volunteers that Stop Hunger Now can set up a meal packaging event at a local church, school or civic group.

The program has a warehouse located in Snow Hill. Kearney noted that as of the end of May, more food had been packaged than all of last year. The organization expects to package more than 15 millions meals this year based on events that already are scheduled — with new events being added all the time.

* Reggie Ponder, Jr. is staff writer for *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City and pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro.

Change at the helm – NC Clergywomen call new convener

The highlight of the annual conference gathering of NC Clergywomen was the installation of the Rev. Tracy Clayton, Gates Charge in the Elizabeth City District, as the Convener.

She and the Rev. Elaine Lilliston, Fuquay-Varina UMC in the Raleigh District, who serves as treasurer will partner in leadership of this conference group.

In the last several years, the number of clergywomen has grown and so has the organization.

The NC Clergywomen include all women in appointive ministry: Deacons, Elders, and full-time and part-time Local Pastors.

The biannual meetings feature one learning event and the fellowship meal at conference.

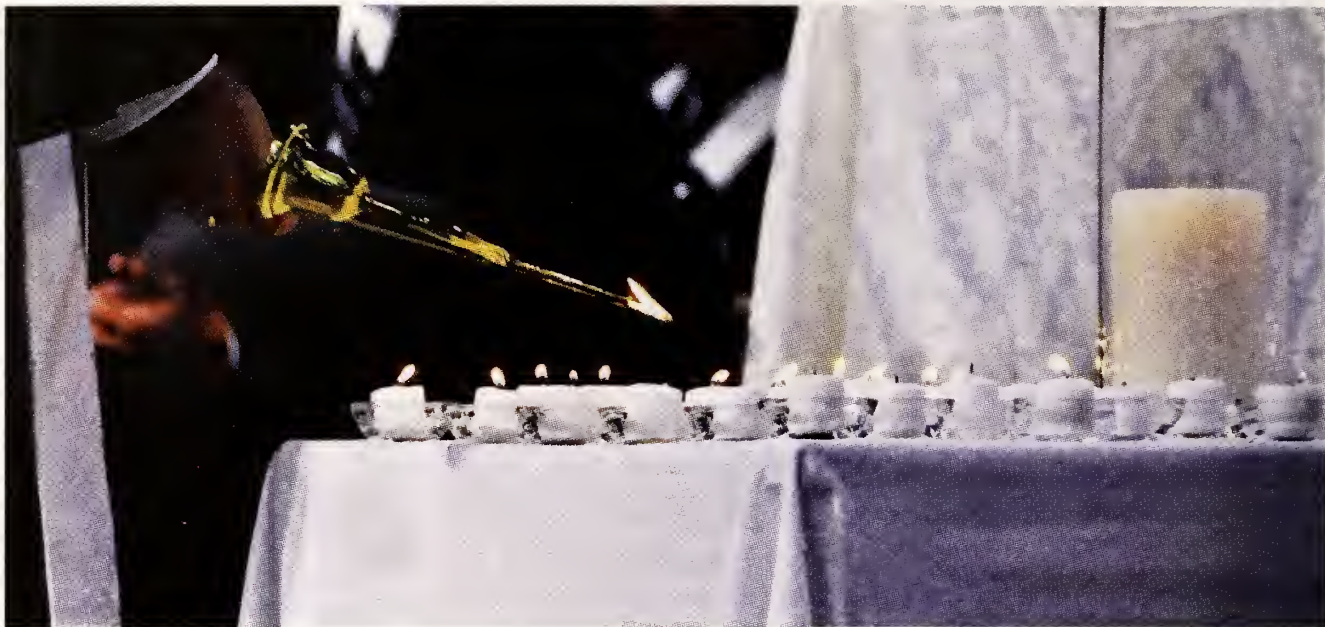
There are no dues, and grants from the United Methodist Foundation have underwritten some costs.

Clayton follows the Rev. Para Drake, Core Creek Charge in the New Bern District, in her responsibilities.

The 2010 "Red Shoe Recognition," given to one who has supported and promoted women in ministry was given to Drake, who joins those who have been named since 2004.

Previous recipients of the Red Shoe include the Revs. Glenda Johnson, Bill Simpson, Bill Gattis, Albert Shuler, Belton Joyner, Kermit Braswell, Bishop Paul Leeland and Bishop C.P. Minnick, retired.

To find out more, visit NC Clergywomen on www.facebook.com.



All Saints' service remembers

The opening worship service for Annual Conference included the remembrance of the following deceased clergy: Riley Tex Hamilton, Barney Lee Davidson, Robert Joseph Rudd, Wayne Esmond Thomas, Dean Healy Morton, Sr., Roger Everett Thompson, Clyde Gay McCarver, Richard J. Williams, Benjamin Ray Melvin, Pernicie C. Yelverton, Patrick Joseph Looney, Bobby Powell Tyson, Sr., Hobart William Burnside, Jr., Leonard Edward Mayo, Samuel Williams Dixon, Jr., Harold "Pete" McElroy Chrismon, Sr., Neil Howard Thompson, Herman Nathan Ward, Jr., and Robert Edward Lee Moser. And the following deceased spouses of clergy: Callie Powell Wooten, Louise Stallings Dawson Forbes, Mildred Murrie Lee, Alta Stone Russell, Glenda Ann Craig, Nancy Wike Andrews, Velva Bass Williams Little, Annie Margaret Johnson Beane, Catharine Allen Vick, and Linda Lane Blue. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Passing of the Mantle

During the closing worship service on Saturday, the passing of the mantle was observed. Retiring elder, the Rev. Joyce Reynolds, represented the retiring class, and the Rev. Larry Chandler represented the new class of ordained Elders.

(Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

Deadline extended to order Annual Conference DVDs

The Conference Communications Office has extended the deadline until Aug. 20 for DVD orders of selected parts of the conference, including worship services and the Friday evening Laity event.

Each DVD costs \$8, made payable to the NC Conference, to cover production and shipping costs.

For a PDF version of the order form, go to <http://nccumc.org/annual-conference-2010/#video> and select "2010 DVD Order Form" from the Documents list.

Complete the form, enclose payment and mail the items as indicated on the form.

Because of copyright issues, some music may be edited out of the recordings.

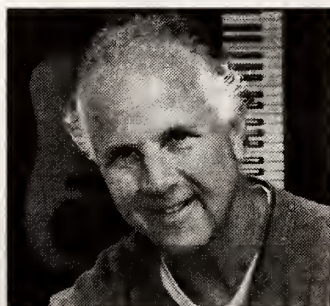
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Bishop's State of the Church address challenges all to overcome prejudices and barriers to ministry in the world

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. *

In a patchwork State of the Church address stitched together with both humor and tears, Bishop Al Gwinn told laity and clergy they should set up camp in the most broken parts of their communities and expect God to do a miracle in their church.

Gwinn, the Episcopal leader of the N.C. Annual Conference, gave his address on the evening of June 10 during the 2010 annual conference in Greenville.

Departing from his usual practice, the bishop did not stick to his manuscript but stood at the edge of the stage — noting he wanted to be “closer to the people” — and spoke in a conversational way about racial prejudice, gender prejudice, and the way a heartwarming personal relationship with Jesus Christ can empower people to overcome those prejudices and other barriers to ministry in the world.

“Our DNA says that we are warm-hearted people,” Gwinn said, referring to Methodist founder John Wesley’s testimony that his heart had been “strangely warmed.”

Christ warms the heart, Gwinn said, adding “I wonder sometimes if you and I are still in touch with who we are as warmhearted Christians who believe in a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.” Jesus should never be a “side issue,” Gwinn said.

“As Methodists we believe in a warmhearted relationship with Jesus Christ” and a disciplined life of walking with Jesus, he said.

The church is commissioned by Christ to make disciples of all nations — all people, he said.

Gwinn said his heart breaks when he hears district superintendents say a church won’t take a pastor because they’re black. “That is ridiculous,” Gwinn said. “That is a sin.”

He said the same holds true of bias against women pastors. “We’ve got to get over that,” Gwinn said.

He said he sometimes expresses his anger about such bias in meetings with the district superintendents.

But fighting back tears, he added “there’s a hurt in my heart that’s deeper than the anger I’m expressing in a particular moment.” He said he weeps about it in his moments alone.

“We are so trapped in this societal evil and sin,” he said.

Addressing discipleship, Gwinn said the church needs to get away from the idea that the basic practices of following Jesus — things like Bible study, prayer, acts of mercy — are optional.



Bishop Al Gwinn
(Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

“We really need to get over church membership,” he said, explaining the focus must be on discipleship.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say the church needs more members for finances and activities, he said. Instead, it’s about discipleship.

As the church learns to do focus on discipleship, “we’re on the cusp of something different,” Gwinn said, having “come to a Y in the road.” Historians will write about this historic juncture in the life of the church, he predicted.

“We are right on the edge of the now and the not yet,” Gwinn said, adding he believes the 2012 General Conference will be a historic conference in Methodism. The church will either move forward bravely or die together in the desert like the ancient Israelites, he said.

Gwinn told the conference audience he wanted everyone to write somewhere, “I hereby resign from the back to Egypt committee.”

Gwinn said there are a couple of things holding the church back from going on in the way God wants it to go, including racism and exclusivity and a failure of clergy to empower laity.

He said he’s trying to figure out how to help clergy go all the way with giving the church back to the lay people.

“You’re close,” Gwinn told Conference clergy. “You’re so close.”

Laity need to minister out of the authority of their Baptism and clergy need to stop thinking they have to do everything, he said. In addition, lay people need to stop thinking clergy have to do everything, he said.

“We have a huge number of lay people out there who are ready to be the church,” who want to be “real disciples,” Gwinn said.

Laity shouldn’t fuss at clergy about empowering them, he said.

Congregations need to stop “formally being the church” and instead listen from their hearts as well as their heads, dream and plan and pray and vision together, he said.

There are very few clergy in the Annual Conference in 2009 who can’t get the job done well if they are encouraged and prayed for and helped by lay people, Gwinn said.

Pastors tend to have high stress and fear, being afraid of the bishop, district superintendents, congregations, each other, he said.

Part of the layperson’s ministry is to minister to the pastor and love the pastor, praying for the pastor and helping the pastor be the person God needs to lead in the congregation.

Bishop Gwinn shared a personal story of how a couple in a church where he was serving as pastor encouraged him by calling after a miserable meeting at the church

and leaving a message on his home answering machine, telling him they loved him.

Clergy must never get over the awe and mystery of God needing them in the ministry of the church, he said.

He urged clergy and laity to be extravagant and generous in their love for each other.

The church also needs to turn that love outward toward the world, reflecting God’s concern for lost people, he said.

God’s heart for lost people at times seems to have “gone off the radar” for the church, Gwinn said. But it’s why Jesus came into the world, he noted.

Gwinn said God had spoken to him about the need to weep for lost people.

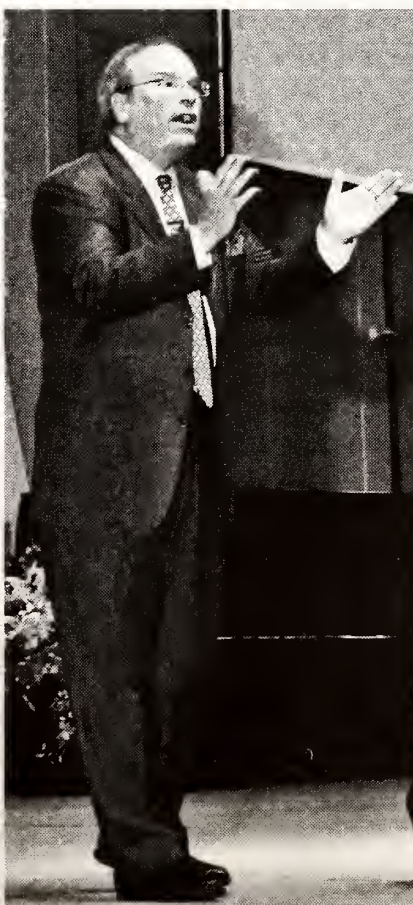
He quoted from a sermon illustration used by the late Jameson Jones, telling a true story about an Episco-

See “State of the Church,” page 10

Success is ‘making the difference you’re in the world to make’

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. *

Philosopher and bestselling author Tom Morris defined success as “making the difference you’re in the world to make” during a high-energy presentation June 11 at the 2010 annual conference in Greenville.



Tom Morris
(Photo by Bill Norton)

Following a dramatic and uplifting performance by the Uganda-based African Children’s Choir — a performance that literally shook the stage as the children danced and sang unique arrangements of songs such as “This Little Light of Mine” and “O Happy Day” — Morris, a United Methodist and longtime philosophy professor at Notre Dame, continued the pace with an up-tempo talk on “The Seven Cs of Success.”

Drawing on the Bible and both classic and modern philosophers, Morris sketched a “universal framework for success” around seven words beginning with ‘C’:

- ♦ A clear CONCEPTION of what we want, a vivid vision, a goal clearly imagined.
- ♦ A strong CONFIDENCE that we can attain the goal.
- ♦ A focused CONCENTRATION on what it takes to reach the goal,
- ♦ A stubborn CONSISTENCY in pursuing our vision.
- ♦ An emotional COMMITMENT to the importance of what we are doing.
- ♦ A good CHARACTER to guide us and keep us on a proper course.
- ♦ A CAPACITY TO ENJOY the process along the way.

Christians believe in living by eternal wisdom and living for Jesus

See “Success,” page 10

Change to Annual Conference schedule draws interest

By Para Drake *

How did conference members experience the presentation and schedule of the 2010 Annual Conference?

While the halls of the conference buzzed with comments both supporting the shortened schedule and decrying the loss of time for more participants in business discussion, many folks met the new schedule without fanfare.

The 2010 membership of the Annual Conference experienced several changes, controversial for some and welcomed by others.

Some participants felt it was one of the best they had attended; more relaxed, and with time for discussion in small groups what might be shared with local churches.

The combining of the All Saints Service with the opening worship and preaching both pleased and displeased participants.

Beginning conference with the acknowledgment of those who, since the last conference, had entered the Church Triumphant, the All Saints Service was described by the Rev. Paul Stallworth as, "very, very strong; especially grateful for the preaching that took place. Richard Hays' sermon was strong and clear. It was a Christ-centered, spirit-empowering word to the conference."

"The ordination and sending forth services, concluding the conference, was good. It was appropriate that the bishop [Al Gwinn] preached the ordination sermon. He set the record straight on ordination and the purposes of ordained ministry," Stallworth said.

On the other hand, lay member Edmund Foreman who had attended more than five conferences from

Core Creek UMC wanted more time for worship and Bible study which was not included this year.

"I think that we should go back to the old schedule. That will give more time for the worship services and will also allow for Bible studies. Combining worship services does not give proper attention to either service," Foreman said.

Ann Davis, attending her 10th conference from Jarvis Memorial in Greenville, said "beginning with All Saints and Holy Communion helped set the mood and created a sweet spirit and worship atmosphere in the room."

"Closing with the ordination service was fitting since the last thing was the fixing of appointments. We ordain, and then send the people out into the world to make disciples of Jesus Christ," Davis said.

Linda Ingraham of Whiteville, a member of the Annual Conference for five years, said combining the All Saints and opening Service of Holy Communion was very appropriate together, proving a "very touching" service. She also felt that combining ordination, fixing of appointments, and the closing service were "very appropriately planned."

One area of general agreement, however, was opposing the format and timing of the retirees' video statements.

Generally, both lay and clergy members expressed the "lack of respect" for those speaking as the videos were played during times of transition between conference business and breaks.

Stallworth noted his preference for live statements, "...because the retirees were present, it seemed strange to watch them on video."

In terms of financial gain or loss by the shortened schedule, the perception of a "wash" was shared by both Foreman and Stallworth.

Foreman observed, "I don't think that the Annual Conference saved any money by shorting annual con-

ference by one day. All of the money that was saved by the Conference was by putting everything online," Foreman said.

Conference Secretary Jerry Bryan said \$30,000 was saved by putting reports and other items for conference vote on the Internet rather than printing and mailing the materials to conference members.

As Stallworth noted, "...[the] degree of efficiency in reporting-[meant] quite a few things moved from the page to the web-site."

Reflecting upon the discussion of some areas of conference business and the confusion arising from the online conference booklet, he concluded, "It is not fair to have the conference booklet—as posted on the conference website—open for revision up until the last moment; we could not be sure what we are working with."

He suggested that the conference booklet "[appear] as a PDF on our conference website [prior to conference] after which no changes could be made. At some point, the booklet needs to be locked and no longer altered."

Davis said she had "no problems without printed materials" but thought first-time members without computers probably would have preferred having the materials printed.

Reflecting some of the concerns Stallworth had about some conference rule changes not being on the Internet, Davis said "it was very hard to follow the changes without the whole documents."

Ingraham said it helped having the

materials online for review prior to conference.

Responses to having all financial matters presented together were generally positive.

Davis thought conference members "could understand it better and see the whole picture. It went very smoothly compared to previous years."

Ingraham said it was a lot of information to digest but it was "well organized and planned appropriately."

The question of the shortened Annual Conference schedule with

the separate clergy session is still in discussion, especially with the Conference move to Raleigh for the next two years and votes being taken in 2011 for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

During delegate voting in 2007, the conference met one day longer and clergy continued voting five hours after conference was adjourned for laity at 12 noon in Saturday.

The Conference Planning Committee continues to have the challenge of creating both a spiritual experience and temporal efficiency when almost 1800 lay and clergy members from across the conference gather at this annual event next year.

* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and an assignment writer for the NCC Christian Advocate.

Survey now online for AC members

Jerry Bryan, conference secretary, is requesting responses to questions about the 2010 Annual Conference. Lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference are asked to click on the link below and complete this short survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BWKRWD6>

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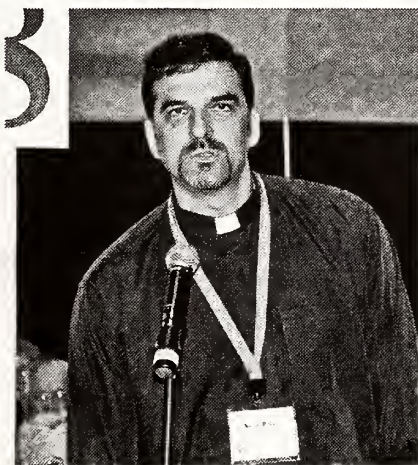
UM Publishing House releases revisions for Discipline 2008

(UMNS)—The United Methodist Publishing House has released revisions to the 2008 Book of Discipline. Recent Judicial Council decisions are included in the changes. The "errata" document can be downloaded at http://www.cokesbury.com/pdf/2008_Errata_Book_of_Discipline.pdf?tr=y&aid=6377386. Subjects include the status of retired local pastors, complaints against Central Conference bishops and Articles of Religion. Previously unpublished additions appear in red.



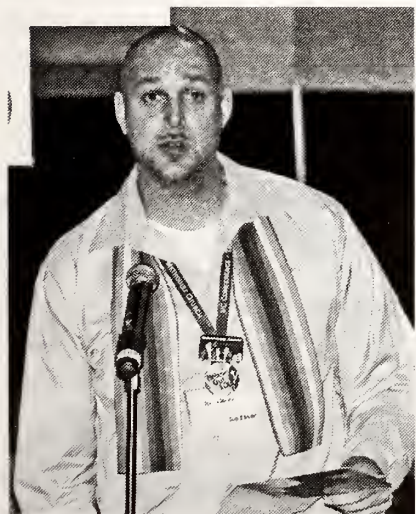
On Friday morning, Col. Jerry Lewis, an elder in the NC Conference and senior United Methodist chaplain in the U.S. Air Force, brought greetings and thanks to the conference on behalf of all persons serving in extension ministry positions. He spoke briefly of receiving his call to ministry while a student at Methodist College (now Methodist University) and of his experiences over the past year as the senior chaplain in Iraq and Afghanistan. Col. Lewis has now been assigned as a lead chaplain in Africa.

At the microphone



At the microphones: (Top left) Karen Nielsen, Haw River UMC; (Middle) Ryan Rowe, Avent Ferry UMC in Raleigh; (Bottom) Regina Dickens, chair of the conference clergy counseling committee; and (Above) the Rev. Kevin Baker, pastor of Reconciliation UMC in Durham.

All photos this page by Reggie Ponder, Jr.



New policy adopted for conference committees

By Taylor Mills *

The Nominations Report included a proposal for a new Conference Policy for Meetings (published in the June edition of the *Advocate*). This policy was adopted by members of the Annual Conference. It covers participation in the committees as well as clarifying the commitment of those serving:

- ◆ The policy sets an expectation of 100% attendance by leaders and members of all meetings. Notification of unavoidable absences must be submitted to the staff liaison for the committee.
- ◆ After three excused absences in a four-year term, the executive committee of the board, committee or team will determine if the member or leader will continue to serve. There will also be an eight year term-limit for serving on a committee or board.
- ◆ Each board or committee will meet at least two times per year and sometimes more frequently.

* Taylor Mills is pastor of Trinity UMC in Durham, chair of the Conference Communications Committee and served as editor of the daily *Saddlebag* publication at Annual Conference.

With discussion, CF&A reports adopted by 2010 conference

By Taylor Mills *

The Committee on Finance and Administration (CF&A), led by Conference Treasurer Christine Dodson and Committee chairperson the Rev. Danny Allen, brought to the Annual Conference a report that included a budget and the reports of their various subcommittees and boards.

After much discussion from the conference members, the report and all of its parts were approved as proposed by the CF&A.

The budget approved by the Conference for 2012 is for \$20,345,625 of ministry funding. This represents an increase of 0.34% over the budget for 2011. The NC Annual Conference votes on a budget that will be raised the next year and used to fund ministry in the following year.

Section VI of the CF&A report made a recommendation for the 2011 salary level for district superintendents. The Annual Conference policy has been that the salary be set at the average of the top 25 salaries and non-vouchered cash allowances of the pastors across the conference. This means that the Superintendents will receive \$101,994 which is a 1.6% raise over 2010. It was noted that the increase in salary was due to the 2009 conference vote to freeze D.S. salaries. If the 2010 salaries had been set according to the policy instead of being frozen, the 2011 salaries would actually have meant a reduction.

Another increase came from the Board of Pension report and the funding plan for the pre-1982 pension benefits paid to retirees. Those benefits are paid in the form of a "per service year rate" (PSR). The conference approved a 2.1% (\$639) increase in the PSR for 2011. This action means that conference liability for the payment of future benefits will be \$51,397,193. Almost \$35 million of this is funded.

Good news came to the conference from the Insurance Committee that recommended no change in eligibility, benefits, or rates for the 2011 insurance year. This is the seventh year that the active plan premiums have remained constant. However, the committee anticipates that an increase in rates will be needed for 2012 premiums.

The Committee on Equitable Compensation brought a recommendation for no increase in the salary, travel, and utilities for pastors on minimum salary. After much discussion, the conference approved their report. Back in 2009, the committee proposed an increase for 2010, but the conference changed it to no increase.

This year's CF&A report included new minimum standards regarding local church finances that can be found in Section IV (printed in the June *Advocate* and available online at nccumc.org/treasurer).

* Taylor Mills is pastor of Trinity UMC in Durham, chair of the Conference Communications Committee and served as editor of the daily *Saddlebag* publication at Annual Conference.

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Success: 'making the difference you are in the world to make' from page 7

in powerful ways every day, said Morris, a member of Wrightsville Beach UMC.

He emphasized that Christians don't understand success in a worldly way. "I'm talking about making your difference in the world," Morris said. "That's how I define success. That's how I think the Bible defines it."

Talking about the first point—clear conception and vivid vision—he called imagination "a great power to accomplish good in the world."

Contradicting the notion that almost any goal is fine as long as you set some kind of goal, Morris insisted "it matters tremendously what our goals are."

He said the greatest advice ever given for powerful goal setting is "know thyself." Morris proposed a series of questions as a starting point in getting to know yourself: Who did God create me to be? What are my talents? What is my calling, my mission?

The second greatest advice in powerful goal setting, he said, is do not allow what is very good to keep you from what is best.

People, families, organizations and churches get stuck on "Hill A" because they won't climb "Hill B," the highest hill. He urged the audience to be bold and set new goals.

Turning to the topic of confidence, Morris said American philosopher William James had called "precur-sive faith" the common core trait of champions. Precursive faith is "faith that runs ahead of the evidence," Morris said.

State of the Church address

continued from page 7

pal priest in Texas who was looking at motorcycles one day and startled the salesman by divulging that he was a clergyman.

The priest had noted that lawn mower salesmen, on the other hand, wouldn't be surprised to learn of his profession.

The story raised a question: Is being a Christian more like mowing the grass or riding a motorcycle?

Gwinn said the church needs to be more motorcycle and less lawn mower.

Borrowing a line from the motorcycle story, he urged clergy and laity alike to "take that baby out on the road and see what she'll do."

* Reggie Ponder, Jr. is staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City and pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro.

While everyone has limits, James said people don't come anywhere near their real limits, Morris said. "God didn't call you to give up," he said.

He described two kinds of confidence: Initial confidence, and resilient confidence or "the kind of confidence that's not going to wilt on the vine."

Morris illustrated resilient confidence by talking about his own challenges when he was asked to be Disney's spokesman for Winnie the Pooh videos.

As the production crew went through take after take with him on a project with a \$3 million budget, he realized he had to rely on precursive faith.

Morris used another story to talk about "focused concentration," the third C.

Zeno said 'divide, then conquer,' Morris noted, meaning break the goal into manageable objectives.

He explained that Don Schlitz, a friend of his growing up in Durham, had no musical talent in his youth but was constantly suggesting to Morris, that they start a band together.

Morris, a guitar player, avoided starting a band with Schlitz, whom he described as playing tambourine without rhythm and singing without a tune.

But Schlitz, working on one piece of his musical career at a time, went on to write "The Gambler" for Kenny Rogers and 55 other top-five country hits.

Morris quipped that now he's the one asking Schlitz, "wanna start a band?"

Moving to the topic of consistency, Morris said his work with corporations and other organizations has shown him the top cause of failure in America is "self-imposed self-sabotage" – acting against our own goals and values.

He said such "persistent inconsistency" stems from one of three possible causes: Ignorance; Indifference; or Inertia.

It's inertia that is the reason bad habits are so hard to break, he said, but imagination is more powerful than inertia.

Explaining the significance of the fifth point, "an emotional commitment to the importance of what we are doing," Morris noted the dual significance principle: Every job productive of any good can be given either a trivial description or a noble description.

He cited Aristotle in talking about the sixth point, the importance of good character.

Aristotle said people are persuaded by people they trust, Morris said.

On the seventh point, "a capacity to enjoy the process along the way," he said Christians are called to show love in the midst of the tough things they're doing.

* Reggie Ponder, Jr. is staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City and pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro.

Worshipful work of Annual Conference is streamlined from page 3

Stop Hunger Now. After the close of conference, members volunteered to paint and gut a kitchen for modernization at a campus ministries location, and to work on a wheel chair ramp. (See page 5 for more informa-

tion on the service projects.)

Ordination, appointments

On the closing day, the Ordination, Fixing of Appointments, and Sending Forth were held as one service. During the commissioning and ordination service, 21 were ordained Elders in Full Connection, two were ordained Deacons in Full Connection, nine were commissioned as Provisional Member-Elders Track, and one was commissioned as Provisional Member-Deacons Track.

Bishop Gwinn delivered the sermon during the Ordination Service. (See page 12 for more information on his sermon.)

Expenses and savings

Lay and clergy conference members saved about 30% over last year's expenses for housing and meals.

The conference realized a savings of about \$30,000 by posting all reports and other materials on the conference website rather than printing and mailing them to members.

However, the actual costs of renting the meeting space and equipment needed to accommodate the Conference session were not noticeably reduced because these assets had to be acquired for a whole week.

Members of the conference voted to meet next year in Raleigh's new convention center. NC Annual Conference last met in Raleigh in 1965.

* Bill Norton is conference director of Communications and Advocate editor.

2010 lay ministries of the year honored

Burlington District: Orange UMC "Prison Ministry"

Durham District: Carr UMC "Firefighter Ministry"

Elizabeth City District: Mt. Olivet UMC "Joy Store Ministry"

Fayetteville District: Person St. UMC "Martha's Table" & "Community Kitchen"

Greenville District: Salem UMC "Kids for Jesus" and Trinity UMC "Feed the Need Stampede"

New Bern District: Trinity, Centenary, and Gerber UMC's "iServe Ministry"

Raleigh District: Horne Memorial UMC "Ryan Epps Home for Children in Haiti"

Rockingham District: Pee Dee UMC "Community Breakfast Ministry"

Rocky Mount District: Spring Hope Charge "Faith Christian Ministries"

Sanford District: Military Ministries

Wilmington District: Wesley Memorial UMC "S.O.ers"



Saints of God Stewardship & Service Award

ABOVE: The United Methodist Foundation gave the Saints of God Award for faithful Christian stewardship and service to Lynn Smith Crumpler (center) of Garriss Chapel UMC, Goldsboro District. For 10 years, Crumpler has served as president of the Garriss Chapel ladies group which has raised money for the church building fund and furnishings. The group also leads mission outreach efforts for drug and alcohol treatment and help for needy children including the church's food backpack program to feed hungry children on weekends. She chaired the Relay for Life event and initiated and coordinates church and public school collaboration, leading Garriss Chapel to be recognized as Business Partner of the Year by the Wayne County School District. Crumpler also serves as a Sunday school teacher, directs and trains acolytes and greeters, coordinates the nursery, and serves as Bible School coordinator. Pictured behind Crumpler are Clara Wade, president of UMF's board of directors, and Dr. Reginald Ponder, board secretary.



Key Taylor Rural Church Award

ABOVE: The Key Taylor Award went to Bethlehem UMC of the Bladen Charge in the Wilmington District. The congregation at Bethlehem UMC was recognized for displaying "extra-mile caring" including a community garden and the sharing of produce with needy persons in their community. The church also hosts a community-wide Thanksgiving service which draws multi-denominational and multi-cultural worshippers. The church reaches beyond their community by supporting the outreach ministry of All God's Children in Aulander, participating with Stop Hunger Now Operation Sharehouse hunger relief ministry, and sponsoring children in ZOE Ministry's empowerment programs for orphans in Africa. The church is pastored by Dr. Tim Reaves and the Rev. Elaine Swett. Receiving the award from the Rev. Sam Loy (extreme left) were Danny Shoular, Administrative Board chair and Bo Tharr, lay leader.

All photos this page by Reggie Ponder, Jr.



Honoring Hendricks' 27 Years of Service

ABOVE: The Rev. Carl King, left, chair of the Conference Higher Education Committee, made a presentation honoring Dr. Melvin Elton Hendricks and his wife Jerry for their many years of service to the NC Conference and their 27 years of service to Methodist University.

Denman Evangelism Awards

The Denman Evangelism Award, named in honor of the late Dr. Harry Denman, a renowned lay evangelist, is given to persons who are recognized by the annual conference for the impact their lives and personal ministry have had on those around them. The recognition is made possible by a grant from The Foundation for Evangelism, an affiliate of the General Board of Discipleship.



RIGHT: The Rev. Carol Dean, representing the Foundation for Evangelism, presented the Harry Denman award to Stephanie Patterson, a youth from Bellemont UMC.

BELOW: Adult recipients of the 2010 Denman Award were Eston Brinkley, Jr., a member of Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington and Dr. Jerry A. Jackson, pastor of Bellemont UMC in Burlington.



Jack & Kay Crum Award for Prophetic Ministry

BELOW: The Jack and Kay Crum Award for Prophetic Ministry was awarded to Sanctuary UMC in Durham for their outreach to the "least, the last, and the lost." The Crum Award, created through an endowment established by the Rev. John Crum and his wife, Kay, is to encourage and support churches and pastors to be on "the cutting edge for incisive prophetic ministry, first in the North Carolina Conference, and, second, throughout the nation and the world." The endowment, administered by the NC Conference and the United Methodist Foundation and awarded through nominations sent to the Conference Commission on Church and Society, provides a financial grant to each recipient church



for the continuation of its mission and ministry. Pictured are the Rev. Patrice Cheasty-Miller, pastor of Sanctuary UMC and the Rev. Brian Wingo, chairperson of the Commission on Church and Society, presenting the award.

United Methodist Men Awards

RIGHT: The G. Ross Freeman Leadership Award, given by the United Methodist Men, went to the Rev. Richard Stone of Fuquay-Varina UMC for his work of inspiration to men who experienced spiritual growth in ministries of evangelism and missions.



(Not Pictured) The NC Conference United Methodist Men awarded the Society of John Wesley Award to Bishop Al Gwinn for his support of men's ministry.

‘Remember it is not your work,’ says Bishop Gwinn to 2010 ordinands

By Reggie Ponder Jr. *

Bishop Al Gwinn’s sermon at the Ordination and Commissioning Service June 12 on the final morning of the 2010 annual conference in Greenville called new ordinands and all clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference to let God work through them.

“Ordinands, God is calling you this morning, and it is important for you to remember it is not your work,” Gwinn said. “God wants to do God’s work through you.”

Building on the image in Colossians 3:3 of a life “hidden with Christ in God” and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s observation “when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die,” Gwinn described ministry as a process of loving Jesus and living for Jesus that’s “countercultural to this culture.”

Some follow Jesus just halfway “but your calling is to follow Him all the way,” Gwinn said.

Dying to yourself isn’t a once-for-all act but must be “an intentional act of the will” that is “also a daily and intentional act of dying to the self.” Saints over the years have taught us “all we need is Christ,” he said.

A life hidden with Christ in God “is in so many ways a mystery” but we can experience it even though we can’t explain it, and can know it as a fact, he said.

Don’t underestimate the power of self-deception and self-centeredness to distract you away from a life hidden with Christ in God, he said, citing the distractions of consumer goods, political ideologies and fast-paced lifestyles.

“Let go of yourself,” Gwinn said. Ordination “is a time to let go of yourself more than you have ever attempted to do it in this life.”

One of the biggest temptations is to make this role “a job rather than a calling,” he said.

But ministry is not about your needs, wants or desires, he said.

“When your people are being changed and your church is being changed, remember: It is not you,” Gwinn said. “It is Jesus that takes these words of truth and drives them deep within our hearts.”

Gwinn told the ordinands that setting their hearts on things above – the things of Christ – and being focused on the heart of Christ, then they will love the world as Christ loves the world.

“It means that you have a heart that genuinely forgives, cares deeply, reaches out regardless, and wants to heal,” Gwinn said.

At the conclusion of the Ordination and Commissioning Service, several people came to the area in front of the stage to witness that they had experienced a call to ordained ministry. District superintendents and friends prayed with them when they came forward.

* Reggie Ponder, Jr. is staff writer for *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City and pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro.

Appointments 2010-2011

A complete listing of all pastoral appointments is available online at the Conference website: nccumc.org/bishop/2010-2011-appointments/. For those who do not have Internet access, contact the district superintendent’s office or call the conference at 800-849-4433.



Ordained as Elders in Full Connection

1st row L-R, Terry Allen Hobbs, Ronald Edward Gurganus, Ellen Margaret McCubbin, Cheryl Moffett Lawrence, Teresa Leigh Buckner, and Larry Michael Hunt; 2nd row, Jessie Shuman Larkins, Martha Kimball McLean, Benjamin David Alexander, Bishop Gwinn, Kellie Kathleen Gallagher-Smith, Karen Baker Angel, Laura Wacker Stern, and Terry Hunt; 3rd row, Cathy McCabe Hoyle, Harold Cleveland May III, Owen Edwards Barrow, Jay David Helms, Henry Edgar Swanzey, and Kent Christopher Smith. Not pictured: Hannah Pinckney McManus.

All photos this page by Bill Norton.



Commissioned as a Provisional Member, Elder

(L-R): 1st row, Philip Robert Chryst, Heather Michele Rodrigues, Bishop Gwinn, Karen Melinda Crutchfield, and Ismael Augustin Ruiz-Millan. 2nd row, Colin Llewellyn Snider, Martin Weldon Franklin III (commissioned as courtesy to the Wisconsin Conference), James Elvin McConnell II, Jeffrey Ryan Babajtis, and Joseph Weldon Franklin III



Ordained as Deacons in Full Connection

(L-R): Christine Anne Burley, Bishop Gwinn, and Amanda Fleishman Wilson



Commissioned a Provisional Member, Deacon

Bishop Gwinn and Kathie Stevens Wilkinson



ABOVE: Lisa Naa-Shormey Yebuah is ordained as an Elder.

BELOW: Bishop Gwinn places a red stole on Laura Wacker Stern as part of the ordination service.

Photos by Reggie Ponder, Jr.



Celebrating women in ministry

A total of 16 women were ordained or commissioned at the June 2010 Annual Conference. At the closing worship service, 11 women were ordained as Elders in Full Connection and two were ordained as Deacons in Full Connection. An increase in women responding to the call of ministry has been a major emphasis within the denomination. ABOVE: Karen Melinda Crutchfield is commissioned a provisional Elder as the Rev. Beth Hood (far left), Greenville district superintendent, and Linda Bourey, executive administrative assistant for the office of Ministerial Relations, add their prayers of support to the words spoken by Bishop Al Gwinn (far right). (Photo by Bill Norton)



Leaders of new faith communities receive prayers of the entire conference

LEFT: Prayers were offered for Chris Brady (standing on the left in front of the stage with his family), who will begin a new faith community in east Durham in January 2011 and Chang Bae Kim (standing on the right), pastor of a new Korean church in northeast Fayetteville. The wife of the Rev. Eric Marshburn, Jodie, who was hospitalized during the conference, also received prayers. Marshburn is the new pastor of Holly Ridge UMC.

(Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

Church Mice



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Row 1 (Left to Right) Mary Kay Ward, Heather Olson, Kay Boone, Kerry Vitkus, John Bracey, John Gumbo; Row 2 (Left to Right) Phyllis Vail, Wanda Simmons, Tom Hallberg, Sue Eldon, Matt Seals, Rich Cooper, Joan Fischer, Antoinette Burwell, Brooks Gale; Row 3 (Left to Right) Lance Sellon, Mark Woods, Jerry Sheffield, Nathaniel Hester, Wayne Dickerson, James Hinson, Jim McConnell, Julie Poston, Alan Felton, Jonathan Mills, Al Marshburn, Joseph McDonald, Scott Foster, Chris Leak, Dawne Hollis-Davis, Shay Hall, Howard James

All photos this page by Bill Norton.



Clergy Retirees Honored

(Left to Right) Row 1: Dennis Draper, Carolyn Pilgrim, Michael Pilgrim, Joyce Reynolds, Christa Brown, Stan Brown, Sue Salmon, and Harold Salmon; Row 2: Phyllis O'Keef, Robert O'Keef, Jack Ruth, Bobbie Ruth, Rick Ward, Shirley Ward, Chuck Plowman, Sally Plowman, Sandy Mull, Curtis Mull, Bessie P. Blue, Judy Dulaney, and Daniel P. Jones; Row 3: Bernice Johnson, Lawrence Johnson, Katie Crane, Larry Crane, Bill Braswell, Patricia Braswell, Henry Blue, Earl G. Dulaney, Diana B. Killian, David Mann, Barbara Mann, Peggy Levin, Dennis Levin, and Ed Morrison; Not pictured: Ann Giles Benson, Doug Currin, Brenda Davis, Walter Gaskins, Rodney Hamm, Glen Hancock, David Heath, Joe Mann, and James Pace.



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NCC layperson creates CyberSafety Training Kit to help local churches protect children and youth through awareness and training

A new, inexpensive training CD developed by the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) is now available to help churches and community groups protect children and youth from the perils that exist in the digital world of cell phones and cyberspace.

NCC layperson created training kit

The training kit was created for GBOD by Paul O'Briant, chief information officer in the Currituck County Public School District and a member of Pilmoor Memorial UMC in Currituck.

"We live in a world where technology is an integral part of all we do. According to recent data from the Pew Internet and American Life Project over 93% of adolescents are online," says O'Briant, whose father, the late Rev. Clarence O'Briant served in the NC Conference.

O'Briant served for several years on the NCC sexual ethics support team and has provided design input and leadership for cyber safety component of conference clergy training events. He has also spoken nationally on the subject cyber safety.

"As parents and other adults in the church, we owe it to our children to educate ourselves about the benefits and risks associated with online behavior," he says. "That is the only way we can help keep them safe. This job is too important to leave to someone else."

Kit connects churches and families

The CyberSafety for Families Training Kit allows the church to be more directly involved in providing awareness and training around technology to help ensure that children and youth are protected as they navigate the internet world, says the

Rev. Susan Hay, Director of Effective Practices in Young People's Ministry at GBOD.

"Technology plays an ever-increasing role in the lives of children and youth," Hay says. "While the rapid advancement in computer technology offers exciting opportunities, it also creates new dangers. Social networking sites, video games, cell phones with cameras and texting have created opportunities for abusers to have access to vulnerable individuals in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago."

Mary Alice Gran, Director of Children's Ministries for GBOD says helping to develop healthy habits in families is an important role for Christians.

"Just as we teach children how to develop the habit of brushing their teeth every day, and saying their prayers every night before they go to bed, or grace at lunch, we need to help children and youth develop healthy habits when they are communicating with people in person or on the Internet," Gran says.

"As church leaders, we are called to

be in ministry with people, not just the people in our local congregation, but the peoples of our communities and our world. The development of this resource, CyberSafety for Families, takes knowledge we have gained and makes it available for everyone as part of our mission," Gran says.

Empowering parents

The kit's CD includes a section on "what you need to know first," a planning guide, teaching plans with schedule options, handouts and a slide presentation. Subjects include safety in the high tech world of computers, cell phones, video games and social networking sites.

"For \$35, you get everything you need to help the parents in your church, and even in your community, to be empowered to help themselves and their children be safe—at least as safe as they can be in the cyber world," Gran says.

The training kit is available online at both The Upper Room (www.upperroom.org) and Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com) and also at Cokesbury bookstores nationwide.

Pastors and certified lay ministers required to attend a sexual ethics training session this fall

Each quadrennium, all pastors and certified lay ministers serving in the NC Annual Conference must attend the updated sexual ethics training, regardless of when they last attended.

All persons who are under Episcopal appointment in the NC Conference (including clergy in extension ministry) must attend this training. Not attending may impact a clergy appointment. Therefore, five dates have been provided so each pastor serving can attend.

To register, pastors must contact the host district office for the selected training location (see below). Ideally, pastors would attend on the day/location in the district where he/she serves, but if that is not possible due to a scheduling conflict, the pastor must (a) alert their DS and (b) connect with the host district for the site they plan to attend.

Each training day will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. – please plan to arrive by 9:30 a.m. in order to settle in prior to the beginning of the training. Lunch will be provided and pastors will be asked to pay a nominal fee to cover the cost of lunch, typically \$5.00 or so.

Sept. 27: Burlington, Sanford and Durham Districts at St. Luke UMC: Sanford Host district: Sanford – Peggy Hendley @ 919-775-7041

Oct. 4: Raleigh, Goldsboro, Rocky Mount at Smithfield: Centenary UMC Host district: Goldsboro – Gina Harr @ 919-734-5324

Oct. 21: Fayetteville, Rockingham, Wilmington at FUMC Laurinburg Host district: Rockingham – Sara Cameron @ 910-276-6641

Oct. 25: Elizabeth City, Greenville, New Bern at St. James UMC, Greenville; Host district: Greenville – Barbara Matthews @ 252-756-3918

Make-up Day Nov. 4: United Methodist Building, 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner; Contact Kristin Grimsley at 919-779-6115

Attendees will meet with a large group from 10 a.m. until noon, break for lunch from noon to 1 p.m. and then meet in three small groups from 1-4 p.m. Pastors will rotate from group to group in the afternoon sessions.

The small group time will be centered around: 1. Social Media, 2. The Fall Out after misconduct occurs, and 3. Boundary Issues.

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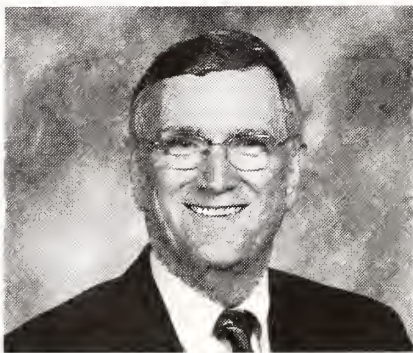
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

August 1, 2010

Text: Philippians 1:18b-29
"Sharing God's Grace"

"Don't do me any favors!"

Have you heard that statement made when someone gives what appears to be a generous offer, but one that, all too well, you know to be fraught with risk and unpleasantness?

Another version of this mixed message is: "With friends like that, who needs enemies?" If folks "on your side" seem about ready to do you in, you hardly need opponents. Your friends can do the job!

"Don't do me any favors!" "With friends like that, who needs enemies?"

Those exclamations came to mind when I read this week's text, particularly Philippians 1:29: "For (God) has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well."

"Believing" in the New Testament is not so much accepting a series of premises about God. Rather, "believing" is more a matter of trust and loyalty. But, look where such trust and loyalty leads you! Suffering!

Paul was in prison as he wrote this letter (Philippians 1:7, 13). He knew well that the harvest of a faithful life is not usually "prosperity gospel" but is more likely "struggle" (Philippians 1:30) or "conflict" as the King James Version translates. For most of us, struggle and conflict is much less an inviting prospect than prosperity!

In a sense, to persevere in the face of suffering is to proclaim the reality of the resurrection.

But take note: Paul is not asking believers to seek out hardship in some kind of spiritual masochism. The context for this understanding of suffering is "live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). That is the invitation. That is the challenge. That is the privilege.

Just as God's grace grants us faith in Christ (Philippians 1:29), God's grace gives us the gift of being more like Jesus, even identifying with his suffering.

As the hymn writer Charles Gabriel wrote: "More like the Master I would ever be. More of His meek-

ness, more humility; More zeal to labor, more courage to be true, More consecration for work He bids me do." Now that's a privilege!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Assist Me to Proclaim*, (William B Eerdmans), John R. Tyson's study of the life and hymns of Charles Wesley, the author writes, "Charles had come to consider persecution as the badge of true Christian discipleship, and now John was receiving his fair share of it. (Charles wrote his brother): 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.'... 'The disciple is not above his master.' 'If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.'... this badge of discipleship, these marks of Christ."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Savior, Lord, Who has called us into a life of discipleship, help us to find the joy in such a privilege. Keep us from fearing the evils of the world that have no power over You..."

August 8, 2010

Text: Philippians 2:1-13
"Giving of Oneself"

On a hunch, I looked it up. It is an interesting discovery. In Philippians 2:5, "you" is plural. Might we say, "Let the same mind be in y'all that was in Christ Jesus?"

It is hard enough to imagine individuals who think/act like Christ. Can we fathom a group, a community, that in its deeds and thoughts is like our Lord?

Last May I was driving home on a Sunday from an event in West Virginia. Around 10:40 a.m., I pulled over and asked my GPS to find the nearest United Methodist congregation.

It listed about 30 that were within 30 miles or so, but I headed for the closest one. It was about four miles off the main route and sat near the railroad tracks of a village through which the train did not pass often.

I wondered if they worshiped at 11:00 a.m., so I was pleased as I pulled into the parking lot of Midland, Virginia, United Methodist Church to hear the steeple bell, pealing a welcome. I slipped into the second pew from the back and took my place

among 17 men and women and one child. The attendance board said there were seven people in Sunday School the previous week.

It was Ascension Sunday and the bulletin cover showed an artist's conception of Acts 2:9. I glanced—as I always do—to see which hymns we would be singing. Five hymns—a rich and varied mix—were proposed.

The lay leader challenged the congregation to bring health kits and flood kits to be taken to the Virginia Annual Conference.

A lay man exhorted the group to be thankful for the far reach of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

One woman was asked to give an update on Nell, a very sick member of the community.

The pastor took time to have "children's time" with the one young girl.

Almost every one of those present sought me out—not hard to spot a stranger in their midst!—to welcome me.

One man, who had seemed to me to be a bit grumpy, was the one who came and prayed that I'd continue to have safe travels.

The sermon traced the same lectionary text that I knew would be shared at the church back home. And, afterward, the congregation did what they do every Sunday: they shared a meal together.

I do not wish to romanticize Midland Church, but I did get a glimpse of what it is for a congregation—not a very large one at that—who seeks to live out the mind of Christ: connectional ministry, outreach beyond themselves, passionate caring for the sick among them, loving the child, singing to the glory of God, hospitality, prayerful intercession, biblical faithfulness.

On a hunch, I looked it up. It is an interesting discovery. In Philippians 2:5, "you" is plural. Might we say, "Let the same mind be in y'all that was in Christ Jesus?"

It is hard enough to imagine individuals who think/act like Christ. Can we fathom a group, a community, that in its deeds and thoughts is like our Lord?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Elton Trueblood (*The Company of the Committed*, Harper and Row) wrote, "If God, as we believe, is truly

revealed in the life of Christ, the most important thing to Him is the creation of centers of loving fellowship, which in turn infect the world."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Open us to the mind of Christ..."

August 15, 2010

Text: Philippians 3:7-16
"Living into the Future"

When Bishop Hope Morgan Ward preached at the 75th anniversary of the North Carolina Council of Churches, she quoted a character from a novel; the character said, "I don't want to live in the past, but I pray that the past lives in me."

Can we also say, "I'm not sure about the future, but I pray that the future lives in me"?

That seems to be the flavor of some of this week's study text: "I press on"... "straining forward to what lies ahead"... "press on toward the goal" (Philippines 3:12-14). The Pauline image is one of an athlete pushing toward the finish line, toward the prize, toward the future.

It all seems so future directed. The United Methodist Church is undergoing "Call to Action," a study to determine what structure is needed if we are to be faithful disciples for the transformation of the world in the twenty-first century.

Energy and focus turn from where we have been to where we are going.

However, as tomorrow seems to rush toward us, we spot verse 16: "Only let us hold fast to what we have attained."

After inviting us into the future, does Paul (in verse 16) take it all back and say, "But, folks, don't change anything!" Hardly. If the future does not contain the past, it is a hollow shell.

No grown man or woman made it to adulthood without passing through childhood.

The past is not the goal, but to suggest that the Holy Spirit has not lived in the past is the height of contemporary arrogance. God's future is coming toward us as we dwell in the time of "not yet."

We rush to meet that future that

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

August and September adult Bible study *from page 16*

rushes to meet us. And that future looks like Christ Jesus (Philippines 3:14). That's why we hold fast to the One who has held us as we live into the future.

We hold fast to the One who taught us to pray for the future: "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

What Someone Else Has Said:

David Keck has written in *Forgetting Whose We Are* (Abingdon Press): "The resurrection is not only about our current bodies, but also about human futurity. To paraphrase an Orthodox theologian, human beings are creatures whose roots are in the future. That is, we cannot understand humanity apart from our resurrected corporeal, glorified state."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of tomorrow, we give You thanks for this day that begins to bring us tomorrow. God of today, we give You thanks for the future that moves toward us..."

August 22, 2010

Text: Philippians 4:2-14
"Growing in Joy and Peace"

There is so much in this week's study text! Instead of pursuing a single theme or emphasizing one particular point, I want to offer several reflections on a variety of topics.

For example, the implication of Philippians 4:2-3 (acknowledging the work of Euodia and Syntyche) is that women did indeed have visible leadership positions in the work of the New Testament church.

For example, Paul's call for the two women to settle their differences (Philippians 4:2) is a reminder that the early believers tasted some of the same water of division as we sometimes drink.

For example, in Philippians 4:3, Paul identifies some of his co-workers as simply "whose names are in the book of life." Truly, most of our work as people of faith is done in public anonymity and in divine recognition.

For example, the word for "rejoice" in Philippians 4:4 (*chairete*) was sometimes used as a greeting and departure term (like the British "cheerio" or the Hawaiian "aloha"), a subtle hint that we are invited both to begin and to end relationships with peaceful joy.

For example, Philippians 4:7 notes that it the work of God to give us peace that is beyond understanding. Such peace comes through

prayer (Philippians 4:6), not through our getting everything figured out.

For example, Philippians 4:8 offers a checklist for daily life—how we spend our time, what we watch on television, the sites we visit on the Internet: true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellence, worthy of praise.

For example, when Paul thanks the Philippians for their concern for him (Philippians 4:10, 14), he challenges us to let others know when their plight distresses us: friends who are sick, migrant workers who are abused, victims of injustice.

Thanks be to God for the richness of these verses!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In writing about these verses, Karl Barth (*The Epistle to the Philippians*, John Knox Press) wrote: "The passage is for that very reason one of the liveliest and most allusive in Paul, or anywhere at all in the New Testament."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee..."

August 29, 2010

Text: Acts 28:16-25a, 28-31
"Upheld by God"

These verses from the closing chapter of the Book of Acts unfold almost like a scene in an epic movie.

The opening shot would show a solitary figure, a prisoner—Paul (28:16). Then, the camera angle would widen to depict his one companion, a soldier who was his assigned guard (28:16).

As the view is expanded, the camera catches the scene with just a few of the local Jewish leaders (28:17) who came to talk with Paul. Then, the wide-angle lens would confirm a large, increasing crowd as "great numbers" from the Jewish community in Rome came to hear Paul (28:23).

Finally, the screen would be filled with multitude after multitude as the apostle proclaims that the gospel message is for Gentile, as well as Jew (28:28).

This study text begins with one man and moves until the grace of God has been sent to the whole world. I hear an echo of the Charles Wesley hymn: "See How Great a Flame Aspires, Kindled by a Spark of Grace." I hear an echo of the song "It Only Takes a Spark to Get a Fire Going." I hear an echo of the familiar adage: "The longest journey begins with one step."

There is a temptation for us to hold

off doing *anything* because we cannot do *everything*. How can I fight injustice? How can I reach non-believers with Christ's message? How can I feed all the hungry and homeless? It can be overwhelming, but is the first step overwhelming?

Harry Denham was a lay evangelist in The Methodist Church. Once he was challenged by a pastor who was criticizing the evangelism efforts of another clergyman. "He's doing it all wrong!" exclaimed the pastor. "His techniques are not right!" he continued.

Then he asked Harry Denham, "What do you think of that man's evangelism?" Denham replied, "I like what he is doing better than what you are not doing."

It intrigues me that this closing chapter of Acts brings full circle the story of how the gospel spreads.

So much has happened and been recorded in Acts that it is hard to remember that it all began with a handful of disciples (Acts 1:6) and then a few more (Acts 1:14) and then many more (Acts 2:5).

That is often the rhythm of God's work, trees that grow from simple seeds. So, what shall we do for starters?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton (*God's Frozen People*, Westminster) wrote: "Art has always been the second interpreter of the gospel. The life lived by Christians is the first."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "You have called me to a first step, O God; You have promised to go with me to the next step..."

September 5, 2010

Text: Exodus 3:1-6, 13-15
"God's Revelation to Moses"

On Pentecost Sunday last May, I worshiped at College Park First United Methodist Church in Georgia. The pastor closed out her special time with children by showing them a beautiful cake she had made for "Pentecost, the birthday of the Church." Carefully, she lighted candles and then tilted the cake toward the children, so they could blow out the candles. Splat! Children, pastor, and cake all went in different directions as the gooey pile of confection plopped onto the sanctuary carpet.

As volunteers rushed to clean up the mess, the pastor ad-libbed, "Pentecost came unexpectedly." A dropped cake was not quite what had been planned!

One of the heritage memories for

United Methodists is Aldersgate Day, that time in 1738 when John Wesley went "unwillingly" to a Bible study that included someone reading (perhaps in German) portions of a commentary on the Book of Romans.

As Wesley listened, the Holy Spirit grasped Wesley heart and the young Anglican priest reported, "I felt my heart strangely warmed."

Some say that out of that experience came the energy for the Methodist movement. A strangely warmed heart was not quite what had been planned!

In this week's study text (Exodus 3), Moses is just doing what he did every day, looking after the livestock that belonged to his father-in-law, Jethro. Moses was out looking for more grass for the flock—he went beyond the wilderness to a more fertile area at Horeb—when he spotted a bush that was burning, but not being consumed. Needless to say, that caught his attention!

And God used that moment to call Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. A vision from God was not quite what had been planned!

I am left to wonder: when has God tried to speak to me and I missed it because I thought what was going on was just ordinary life: a children's sermon, a routine Bible study, a day out with the sheep (Exodus 3:1)?

I am left to wonder: when has God called me and I missed it because I thought "Surely God does not mean me" (Exodus 3:11)?

I am left to wonder: when has God sought to invite me to mission and I turned it down because I figured I did not know enough (Exodus 3:13)?

Almost at the beginning of the biblical account of how we human beings act, there is the story of our trying to hide from God (Genesis 3:8).

It doesn't work. God is the God of surprising grace. God is the God of the unexpected call. God is the God of revelation in the midst of the ordinary. That does not leave much room for hiding!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *I Walked the Sloping Hills* (Stovepipe Publishing), Walter M. Brown of Durham tells of a turn in his life journey: "This scenario began when I reluctantly agreed to make a site visit for the (United States Office of Education) in the bleak of winter, to a place I had never heard of, and a stranger pointed me to new horizons. It is reminiscent of Plato's counsel that the beginning is the most important part of the work."

Call to Action team research indicates areas of opportunity and challenge for denomination

The denomination's Call to Action Steering Team has released the findings of independent research commissioned by the committee regarding congregational vitality and an operational assessment of the connectional church, and invites others to review the research and provide comments and ideas.

The steering team reviewed the two reports at their June meeting, and will be further examining the implications of the data as they work toward formulating recommendations to be presented to the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table in November.

"We will be using that information to fashion and forward recommendations about how The United Methodist Church should organize, the role of its leaders, and the kinds of processes we should use to fulfill our mission," said Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, steering team chair.

Comprehensive research

Comprehensive research was conducted on data from various sources in order to gain information about the factors that lead to congregations being more vital as evidenced by attendance, growth and engagement.

The process included interviews with stakeholders across The United Methodist Church, group meetings, and surveys targeted at different stakeholder groups. In addition, data on attendance, growth, and engagement from over 32,000 churches in North America was analyzed.

Dynamic churches

The highly reliable statistical findings indicate that high vitality churches come in all sizes, ethnic representations, church settings, and geographies, but they consistently share some common factors that work together to influence congregational vitality.

Dynamic churches tend to have inspirational preaching, lots of small groups and programs including programs for children and youth, and a

mix of both traditional and contemporary worship services including contemporary music and multimedia in contemporary services.

Other factors include effective lay leaders, rotating lay leadership, more topical preaching in traditional services, pastors who work at developing and mentoring lay leaders, and length of pastoral appointment.

An essential finding of the research was that it's the combination of factors that contribute to vitality, rather than any one or two.

"The most exciting thing about these findings is that they show that what is working for these churches can work for many churches, and we can deliver resources and support that lead to vitality for many more congregations," said Bishop Palmer.

The four key drivers of vitality indicators were consistent regardless of church size, predominant ethnicity, and jurisdiction.

Region and size impacts

However, in addition to these vitality indicators, some nuances by church size and jurisdiction were noted.

For large churches, being representative of the community and having pastors who spend more time

on preaching, planning and leading worship had a strong relationship with vitality.

In the South Central and Southeast jurisdictions, the length of tenure of the clergy as pastors had a relationship with vitality, while in the Northeast, pastors spending more time on personal devotion and worship had a strong relationship.

In the Western jurisdiction, churches that are representative of the community and have a pastor that leads in the context of the community have a higher association with vitality.

The second body of research was a system-wide operational assessment of the connectional church which looked at how the denomination is currently using people, money and processes at the district, annual conference and general church levels.

The report concludes that the church is "confronting a 'creeping crisis of relevancy' of both internal and external origin" and "although the crisis is being influenced by financial duress, it is not foremost a financial crisis."

Key improvements

The study indicated some key areas where improvement is needed.

These areas include:

- ♦ More clarity and understanding about the denomination's mission, culture and values
- ♦ Less perceived organizational "distance" between and among the foundational units of the church
- ♦ Better defined leadership roles, responsibilities, and accountability; and improvements in trust
- ♦ More standardized management processes and reporting systems
- ♦ Utilizing opportunities for improved affordability and effectiveness

"It's important that we align our culture, structures and processes in ways that support vitality in congregations," said Palmer. "The findings confirmed that there are key areas that need improvement. The steering team and many others share a commitment to address these elements as we enter the next phases of our work."

Both of the full reports are available for review at www.umc.org/ctaresearch, and readers can share observations and suggestions through the website.

Gray named UM men's ministry specialist

Charlie Gray, 52, Executive Director of the MERCI Center, has been certified as a United Methodist men's ministry specialist to help area churches expand their ministries to and with men in the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Gray is one of only 18 men in the country to hold this certification.

Gray currently serves as President of the Raleigh District United Methodist Men.

He is also President of Banded Brothers, a 501(c)3 Christian charity comprised of men who share a heightened passion to serve others.

Gray is a past president of UM Men of Fuquay-Varina UMC where he leads M.E.T.S. (Men Eager to Serve), a "down-and-dirty-speak-your-mind" group founded upon a covenant of total confidentiality.

The 1,700-member congregation has two groups of men that hold monthly breakfasts with an average attendance of 60.

Gray is married to Donna and has two sons, Trey, 22, and Joseph, 14.

He is quick to attribute his involvement in mission and ministry to a very supportive and understanding family.

"They eat a lot of meals without dad" says Gray when he is asked about his busy schedule. "I could not do what I do without my family behind me."

Men want adventure

"Men seek adventure; they want activity," said Gray. "The days of standing in a circle holding hands and singing Kumbaya are gone."

"Men want excitement, challenge, wind in their faces; they want to fix things; they want to rescue people; and most of all they want relationships built on trust with other men."

Banded Brothers, managing partner of MERCI Center, has organized 17 trips to the Biloxi, Miss., area to deliver goods following Hurricane Katrina and raised over \$100,000 for relief efforts there.

"Our most recent local project was the building of four 880-square-foot

cabins at Camp Rockfish, a UM children's camp," said Gray.

"The men's group at our church built the first cabin and our efforts spilled over into our Raleigh District with over 15 different churches participating in the building of the final three cabins."

Challenge for men

"The number one problem men face today is loneliness," said Gray. "While we think we have many friends, when the going gets tough somehow no one is there. Without strong Christian masculine fellowship, men will find solace in alcohol, drugs, porn, or bury themselves in their job."

"Our wives need strong husbands to provide leadership in the home," he said.

"Our children need strong role-model dads. Our communities need strong men of faith to hold public office and take a stand for what is right and just in our world. That is our challenge as United Methodist Men."

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UM statistics from across the U.S. show four conferences grow *from page 3*

five people to 237,495, and worship attendance is up by 400 to 83,452.

That kind of growth, while small, is nothing new for the conference, which encompasses the eastern side of North Carolina.

The conference has seen its membership grow for the past 15 years, said the Rev. George D. Speake, the conference statistician and pastor of First UMC in Henderson.

Speake attributed the growth in part to North Carolina's overall growth in population.

In addition, a commitment to new church starts may have contributed to the increases. Since 2000, 29 new faith communities were started. Of that number, 21 continue to be in ministry.

The conference also offers periodic leadership training for pastors each year. The bishop requires all pastors who are moving to a new appointment in a given year to attend a leadership development seminar.

Perhaps most significantly, Speake said, throughout his 30 years as pastor, the conference's bishops and cabinet members always have emphasized the necessity of evangelism.

Steady losses in U.S.

U.S. membership has declined every year since The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 and dropped by nearly 590,000

between 1998 and 2008, according to the 2010 State of the Church Report commissioned by the Connectional Table.

Earlier this year, the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration reported U.S. membership dropped 1.01 percent to 7,774,420 in 2008.

It was the largest percentage decline since 1974, when membership dropped 1.06 percent.

Thirty-nine of 62 U.S. conferences reported membership figures for 2009. Because of mergers in the Northeastern Jurisdiction, the total number of conferences has since dropped from 62 to 59.

These statistical reports reflect information from some conferences that were part of the merger.

Many conferences reported sharp declines including the Indiana Annual (regional) Conference with a 5.15 percent decrease in membership and a 4.2 percent decrease in attendance.

The conference's church school attendance plummeted by 9.5 percent to 39,329.

The California-Nevada Annual (regional) Conference reported its greatest loss in membership since 1981, dropping about 2.3 percent.

In both cases, church leaders attributed the declines in large part to a more thorough cleansing of the church rolls of people who no longer have any

United Methodist affiliation.

Addressing the problem

The United Methodist Church long has looked for ways to reverse the trend of dwindling numbers in the United States.

Recently, the Call to Action Steering Team — a group of clergy and laity appointed to address system-wide problems in the church — released a report on "Congregational Vitality." (See pg. 18 for more.)

MARRIAGE

Para Drake (New Bern: Core Creek) and Will Drake were married on May 14.

BIRTHS

Laura Wacker Stern (Elizabeth City: Ocracoke) and Andrew Stern announce the birth of a son, Charles Graham, on May 20.

Eric (Rocky Mount: Warren Charge) and Bobbye Schubert welcomed a daughter, Ella Renee, on May 24.

Chad (Durham: Marrow's Chapel) and Amy Holtz announce the birth of a daughter, Ava, born June 2.

The assessment, based on analysis of data from more than 32,000 United Methodist churches in North America, identified four main "drivers" of church growth, attendance, giving and professions of faith.

These drivers are: a mix of both traditional and contemporary worship services, small groups including programs for children and youth, inspirational preaching and lay leadership.

Churches of varied sizes, ethnicities and settings all could be characterized as "vital," the report found.

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

DEATHS

WARD, Herman (Burlington retired) died May 28. A memorial service was held May 31 at Hillsborough UMC.

PITSCH, Helen, wife of Bob Pitsch (Elizabeth City: retired) died June 1. A funeral service was held June 4 at Colington UMC.

MOSER, R. E. Lee (Burlington: retired) died June 5 at the age of 98. He was the oldest clergy member of the North Carolina Conference. The funeral was held June 8 at Davis Street UMC.

YORKEY, Camille (Wilmington: incapacity leave) died June 13. Memorial services were held at Benson Memorial UMC in Raleigh on June 17 and at Grace UMC in Wilmington on June 18.

conference CALENDAR

July

- 10-17 Appalachian Trail Hike for Youth
- 14 A Taste of Alpha, Evergreen UMC, Chapel Hill
- 19-24 Annual Conference Session for Youth (ACS)
- 21-24 UMW School of Christian Mission, Methodist University, Fayetteville

August

- 7 Getting Started with Alpha 8:30am -5pm, Forest Hills Baptist Church, 201 Dixie Trail, Raleigh
- 15 Golden Cross Sunday
- 22 Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries special offering
- 23-25 Convocation on the Rural Church, Myrtle Beach, SC

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

September

- 6 Labor Day (UMB closed)
- 12 Legacy Sunday with special offering
- 14 Gathering of the Order of Elders, 9:30am-3pm, Nashville UMC, Nashville
- 16 Planning Worship that Works, Edenton St. UMC
- 17-19 UMW Mother-Child Retreat, Camp Don Lee
- 18 Disciple Bible Study and Rings of Fellowship training, First UMC: Cary
- 25 Disciple Bible Study and Rings of Fellowship training, Haymount UMC, Fayetteville
- 29 Older Adult Ministries Committee, new Methodist Building, Garner, 10am
- 30 A Gathering of the Order of Deacons, 9:30am-3pm, location TBD

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Parkwood UMC offers studies on Islam to help educate their congregation, welcomes Muslims to the community

By Flo Johnston *

Parkwood UMC hosted a "Welcome to the Community" dinner Sunday for the mosque on Fayetteville Street, Masjid Ibad Ar-Rahman, the new owner of Parkwood Shopping Center.

The church and shopping center are across Revere Road from each other. The idea for the dinner began developing last fall after Dr. Bob Kretzu heard the city's oldest and largest mosque was looking to buy the shopping center.

Kretzu set up a series of study sessions on Islam last winter. They included such people as Mike Brooks, chairman of the Parkwood Association, who is a Baha'i believer (the Baha'i Center is next door to the church); and two members of the Ar-Razzaq Islamic Center, a mosque on Chapel Hill Street. About this time Kretzu met a man who had spent years in the Islamic world and had success in fostering relations with Muslims through Jesus.

The man told him, "You need to leave Christianity out of it. But if you focus on Jesus, they tend to be very open."

Muslims believe Jesus is the messiah, that Jesus worked miracles and was born of a virgin, that he



Imam Amr Dabour

was a prophet and that he will come again, Kretzu said. "They are interested in talking about Jesus, who is mentioned some 80 times in the Koran but includes little about his teachings," he said.

The welcome idea also gained momentum after Kretzu talked with the pastor of a church formerly located in the shopping center. "He said that when his church first moved to the community, they held an event to which the community was invited but nobody attended," Kretzu said. "His people felt hurt and offended by this."

"Imam Amr Dabour is very motivated in building friendships and understandings and cooperating in the community," Kretzu said. "We want to send ripples of hope to other places by the model here in Parkwood in the way we relate and work together for the good of the whole community."

Dabour said his congregation does not have immediate plans to move from its 3034 Fayetteville Street location. "We will not move physically until we pay off all the debts we owe, probably three or four years," he said.



Dr. Bob Kretzu

The mosque will continue to rent the shopping center. Present plans call for the mosque to use the new space for expansion as it is needed and a possible school is being considered.

"I think we can discuss this with the community and think about what is good for the larger community in general and the possibility of doing something positive together," Dabour said.

Also, the mosque has two major feast days during the year when it needs a larger space: Ramadan, which follows the lunar calendar (this year will be in August), and a second feast that occurs 70 days after that in winter.

The mosque has been on Fayetteville Street for 30 years and has had a good relationship with its neighbors, the imam said. "We are not well known, but we ask anybody who wants to know anything about us to come to us," he said. "Everybody is welcome, and we will be very happy to get to know them." The three services on Fridays include 30 minutes of speaking and 10 minutes of prayer and are held at 1:00, 5:15 and 10 p.m.

* Flo Johnston is a correspondent with the Durham News. Reprinted with permission.

Denomination praised by North American Islamic Society for 'remarkable' interfaith work for social justice, peace, and equity

By Susan Hogan *

The nation's largest organization of Muslims, drawing 20,000 people to its annual convention, on July 4 bestowed its "Interfaith Unity Award" to the Northern Illinois Annual (regional) Conference. The praise extended beyond the conference as leaders of the Islamic Society of North America called the United Methodists "remarkable."

Muslims dedicated an entire page of the program to pay tribute to United Methodists. "At the national level, the Islamic Society of North America has found a close ally in The United Methodist Church," the program said, "both working together in campaigning for social justice, peace and equity."

The recognition held special meaning for the Rev. Amos Oladipo, who heads the conference's ecumenical and interfaith outreach. He grew up in Nigeria, the son of a Muslim mother who later converted to Christianity. "I grew up knowing there were good people in many faiths. I learned the importance of working together."

United Methodists adopted an official resolution to work with Muslims in 1992. The statement, "Our Muslim Neighbors," was amended and re-adopted in 2004. The statement encourages United Methodist agencies and local organizations to work with Muslims to address "common problems and concerns."

Several key world religious leaders, including Sheikh Ali Gomaa, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, and Michael Kinnamon, general secretary of the National Council of

Churches, were on hand for the award presentation.

United Methodists are now working with Muslims in ways never before seen. For instance, the denomination's largest U.S. charity works with British Muslim charities to provide aid to for countries affected by disaster, poverty and conflict, such as Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Another example of new interfaith partnerships is seen in Claremont University's agreement to serve as a training ground for religious leaders in Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions.

"There are many Methodists working hard at these relationships," said the Rev. J. Philip Wogamon, professor emeritus of Christian Ethics

at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

At the same time, some United Methodists oppose those relationships because they fear interfaith cooperation leads to co-opting of the Christian faith, he said.

Wogamon, a past president of the D.C.-based Interfaith Alliance, said the impact of global religious conflict makes cooperation between people of faiths more critical than ever before.

"There are Muslims who are open and desirous of conversation and cooperation, and there are Muslims who are narrow and militant," he said. "You could say the same thing about Christians."

The faiths also come together around various social justice issues, uniting in their appeals to state legislators.

"Working with United Methodists has taught us the value of shared experience," said Imam Kareem Irfan, president of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago. He's the first Muslim to serve in that role.

United Methodist policy, set forth in "Our Muslims Neighbors," makes it clear that converting Muslims to Christianity is not the goal of interfaith work.

"Because my mother was a Muslim, I knew how deeply the people loved God. We lived in harmony together as Muslims and Christians," said Oladipo.

Today, he fosters harmony between Muslims and Christians in Illinois. "My mother would be happy," he said.

* Susan Hogan is a freelance writer in Chicago.



In 2004, United Methodist Committee on Relief vehicles delivered boats to communities in Sri Lanka following the Indian Ocean tsunami that devastated coastal communities of South Asia and East Africa and has provided millions in aid and emergency relief to Indonesia, India, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. UMCOR works in partnership with Muslim Aid, a British Muslim charity, on relief projects around the world.

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

2010 African-American Women's Leadership Conference - Aug. 5-7

On Aug. 5-7, Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center will host "The Strong Black Woman - a Gentle Force for God," an African-American Women's Leadership Conference. Lay and clergy African-American women are welcome to attend. Participants will discuss life issues such as health, spirituality and family from a distinctively African-American female perspective and share approaches to assist in dealing with the relevant issues in their lives and the impact being grounded in their faith can have upon these issues.

Conference speakers include African-American women who have been influential in the church and other venues, including Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes of Durham. More information about the conference, including speaker biographies, schedule, and registration information can be found at <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/african-american-women/>, or by calling Pam Naplen at 828-454-6656. Cost is \$159.

Welcome the Stranger: Workshop on Immigration - Aug. 8

The Hispanic ministry from White Plains UMC invites to you to a workshop on immigration understanding "Welcome the Stranger," Aug. 8 at 5pm. (313 SE Maynard Road, Cary, NC 27511). Special guests: the Rev. Rosanna Panizo from NC Conference Immigration and Refugee Committee; Nayely Huertas of El Pueblo Inc. of NC; and two Hispanic members of our congregation who will share their personal stories as immigrants. This workshop is completely free. For questions, contact the Rev. Edith Salazar-Veliz, Ministerio Hispano Luz del Pueblo, White Plains UMC, at (919) 467-4685.

Apply for Ethnic Church Grant - Aug. 10

Aug. 10 is the deadline to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants are to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership development as they engage in social justice. To qualify for grant consideration, applicants must be either: a) a United Methodist local church, district, annual conference, racial/ethnic caucus, or other affiliated ethnic group/organization; or b) an ecumenical group/organization working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization whose program has an impact on at least one United Methodist ethnic minority local church. For more information on the criteria and how to apply, go to www.umc-gbcs.org; click on Leadership Development tab, and then GBGS Grants.

Workshop on Hospitality Toward Those with Disabilities - Aug. 29

On Sunday, Aug. 29, Epworth UMC in the Durham District is hosting a workshop, "The Beckoning Door: Measuring Your Church's Hospitality Quotient." The 2-hour program focuses on extending hospitality to visitors and members with an emphasis on improving accessibility for those who have limitations due to physical needs, mental health needs, or learning disabilities. Sponsored by the NC Conference Committee on Disability Concerns, this is a free workshop led by Alyson J. Breisch, RN, a Commissioned Minister of Congregational Health and Parish Nurse. This workshop can be scheduled in other local churches or districts by calling Hope Vickers at 919-489-6557.

Feed Your Neighbor - Aug. 29

SoSA invites all United Methodists to participate in Feed Your Neighbor Sunday on Aug. 29. At the end of the summer growing season, gardeners usually have an overage of tomatoes, zucchinis and okra. On Feed Your Neighbor Sunday, persons can bring the extra produce to church, and Society of St. Andrew will find people in need in the local communities who can use the food. Feed Your Neighbor Sunday includes a worship guide and activities for kids. Please e-mail Kate Pattison at sosanc@endhunger.org for details.

"Planning Worship that Works" seminar - Sept. 16

How can clergy and lay leaders work together to develop worship that fulfills the mission of the congregation, connects with those who do not attend and makes use of the creative talents within the congregation? How can pastors be energized and equipped to communicate the gospel in a rapidly-changing world of contemporary communication? Jim Harnish, of Hyde Park Church in Florida will be leading this discussion at Edenton Street UMC on Thursday, Sept. 16, from 9 a.m. -3 p.m. The registration fee is \$75 but the early bird price is \$65, if registered by July 15. This workshop will offer practical help in developing a worship planning process that engages both clergy and laity in offering passionate, exciting and invitational worship. To register, or for more information, please call 919-208-2169 or email lwiebesmith@nccumc.org.

DISCIPLE trainings - Sept. 18, Oct. 2

The Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, in partnership with The Duke Endowment, will offer two free trainings for NC Conference leaders of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP. Trainings this fall include: Sept. 18 - First UMC, Cary and Oct. 2 - Haymount UMC, Fayetteville. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call 336-454-5348.

Edelman, Carder at Junaluska Peace Conference on Sept. 18-21

The third annual Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Sept. 18-21, will explore social issues facing children. Participants in the conference, "Peace for the World's Children," will have the opportunity to join children's advocates from across the United States for a variety of workshops and presentations. Conference leaders include Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, Dr. Jeni Stepanek and Bishop Kenneth Carder. For more information, see <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace/>.

Historical Society Workshop - Oct. 2

The NC Conference Archives and History Commission and Historical Society are sponsoring a workshop that will provide teaching and learning for gathering oral histories and employing media to preserve local church history on Oct. 2 at First UMC, Wilson, from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Excellent leadership will help participants use formats and technologies to collect and store sacred memories. A box lunch is the only cost (free will offering) for this professional training experience. Please register with Robin Harry at rharry@nccumc.org. Church historians and their guests (including media-savvy youth) are encouraged to attend.

10-Fold-Global Connections - Oct. 10

10-Fold is about multiplying ministry and mobilizing passionate people to stand up and be counted for the causes they believe in. The event will launch on Oct. 10 and last for ten days. Every day will focus on a different project supported through The Advance, the designated giving arm of The United Methodist Church. The goal is to gain the support of 10,000 people for each of the 10 projects. View a video about 10-Fold at <http://www.10-fold.org/>.

Being United Methodist in the 21st Century - Oct. 14-16

Do you know conference or church leaders who are struggling with what it means to be Christian and Methodist in the 21st Century? If so, the General Board of Discipleship recommends the Wesleyan Leadership Conference to be held Oct 14-16 at West End UMC in Nashville, TN. The conference will look at not only the vision, message, and method that helped John Wesley lead a revival among the people called Methodists but also how the same vision, message, and method can bring revival in the church today. For more information or to register, visit the GBOD web page at <http://is.gd/dRndD>.

August and September adult Bible study *from page 17*

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of the unexpected, open my heart and mind to the times You show up when I least expect You..."

September 12, 2010

Text: Exodus 20

"God's Covenant with Israel"

Do you suppose that this week's study text is the most familiar passage in the Bible? Do you suppose that this week's study text is the most ignored passage in the Bible? We have come to call these verses "the Ten Commandments." (The text just says: "Then God spoke all these words.") (Exodus 20:1)

The first thing God does is to identify God's self, revealing who is talking: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery..." (Exodus 20:2).

Sometimes, clever pastors will play a trick on a colleague by telephoning and, with a disguised voice, saying, "John, this is Bishop Cannon (or Minnick or Edwards or Gwinn)."

Usually, the victim recognizes the ploy and does not fall for it. However, there have been times when the bishop *really did* call a pastor, who assumed it was a mischievous friend and said things to the real bishop that perhaps had best been left unsaid!

It does make a difference when you know who is really on the other end of the line! This revelation from God begins with God's showing God's credentials.

One might think that the people would flock to hear what God had to say, but they don't.

The thunder and lightning and loud trumpet scared them off (Exodus 20:18).

The Israelites did what we all do so well: let's ask somebody else to handle this for us (Exodus 20:19). Let's let the pastor do all the visiting! Let's let the laity do all the talking about money! Let's let the district superintendent handle this conflict in our church! Let's let the bishop worry about missions in far places!

When have I been willing, even eager, for others to deal with difficult social issues?

When have I been willing, even eager, for someone else to speak a word in behalf of Jesus?

When have I been willing, even eager, for another denomination to face the public heat from a

prophetic witness?

It does indeed make a difference when we know who is on the other end of the line. But, when the caller is God, we face yet another question: do I dare listen or am I counting on someone else getting the message?

What Someone Else Has Said:

In 1915, Henry Sloan Coffin wrote sermons about the outbreak of World War I (*The Ten Commandments*, George H. Doran Company): "The outbreak of the Great War in the summer of 1914 seemed to many to set us abruptly in the midst of another age,...We were startled and appalled to find ourselves suddenly thrust back into a day of pagan horrors...A restatement of the Ten Commandments seemed timely; their application an urgent necessity."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Speak, Lord, we listen...speak, Lord, we need to hear...speak, Lord...to us..."

September 19, 2010

Text: Exodus 32

"God versus 'gods'"

(Every so often, I like to include a disclaimer in this series of Bible studies. In order to meet the publication deadline, I almost always have to write this material before I see the student and teacher books made available through Cokesbury. This means that from time to time I might be duplicating comments found in those resources. If that happens, consider yourself twice blessed or twice confounded! Thanks. I feel better now.)

This chapter, Exodus 32, runs like a roller coaster. It begins with the Israelites getting frustrated with how long it took Moses to come down from the mountain (Exodus 32:1). (At this point, they do not know about the Ten Commandments.)

Next, God gets very angry at the way the people have turned to a golden calf (Exodus 32:9).

Then, Moses tries to convince God to turn off God's wrath (Exodus 32:12).

The next report is that indeed God has "changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people" (Exodus 32:14).

However, it becomes Moses' turn to "burn hot" against the Israelites (Exodus 32:19).

That's not the end of the ride: Moses goes back to God and pleads for God to forgive the people (Exodus

32:32). The chapter closes with an angry God sending a plague on the people (Exodus 32:35).

Down. Up. Down. Up. Down. Up. Down. Within these verses, there is an enormous range of attitude: frustration of the people, anger of God, a plea for forgiveness, the calmness of God, the anger of Moses, another bargaining for forgiveness, the anger of God.

But perhaps no verse is more central to the story than Exodus 32:34. In spite of all the mistakes, the righteous wrath, and the misspent forgiveness, God still wants Moses to lead the people (sinful as they are) to the Promised Land. God will even send God's messenger to go in front of them (Exodus 32:34).

The people had turned and worshiped a god that was handmade by one of their own (Exodus 32:4).

Even so, God was not diverted from God's purpose to save God's people. God's people broke the covenant (symbolized in Moses' breaking the tablets of legal agreement—Exodus 32:19) and it had to be re-established (see next week's study of Exodus 34).

Is there not good news in this account? The sin of the people—our sin?—does not mean God gives up.

The people are punished (Exodus 32:34-35), but God stays with them for the rest of the journey (Exodus 32:34). Praise God!

What Someone Else Has Said:

Carl Michalson (*The Hinge of History*, Scribners) wrote, "(Humankind) simply has possibility. But God is Possibility....God is the being who is the possibility of everything else."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Give a new beginning, Lord..."

September 26, 2010

Text: Exodus 34:1-10

"God Promises an Awesome Thing"

The Hebrew word is *yâré'*. The King James Version translates it "terrible." The New Revised Standard translates it "awesome." The New English Bible translates it "fearful." The Good News Bible translates it "great." The Contemporary English Version translates it "marvelous."

What is it that translators find so challenging to translate? This word (pronounced yaw-ray') shows up in Exodus 34:10 as a description of what God will do for God's people.

Is it any wonder that we struggle

to find a word that will capture the power of the mystery of God's work?

After Moses broke the tablets previously inspired by God (Exodus 32:19), the Lord tries again to establish a covenant with the Israelites.

In Exodus 34:1, God announces that Moses is to replace the broken tablets with new stones.

In Exodus 34:28, the covenant is offered again; once more two tablets are used to record the agreement between God and God's people.

Terrible! Awesome! Fearful! Great! Marvelous! Words tumble out as we get some sense of the work God will do among God's people. (Is there any significance to the fact that the NRSV says these are things God will do *with* God's children, not something God will do *for* God's children—Exodus 34:10?)

These verses teach us that God is a God of a second chance. Instead of a closed door, we stand in front of an opened door.

At the threshold of this door lie the shards of our broken covenant. We do not ignore our sin; we do not disregard how we have failed to keep the covenant; and God invites us to try again.

No wonder that we cannot quite find the right word to describe such grace, such gift, such terrible-awesome-fearful-great-marvelous work of God!

The context for the new beginning is worship (Exodus 34:8). It is in the praise of God, the confession of our sin, and the openness to grace that God begins the mighty deed.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Eerdmans), Eugene H. Peterson has written: "The Sinai event is a kind of axle for holding together two basic realities: one, everything God does involves me (election); and, two, everything I do is therefore significant (covenant). Because I am chosen, I have consequence. Election creates a unique identity; covenant describes a responsible relationship. Election is the declaration that God has designs upon me; covenant is the description of how the things I do fit into those designs."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Eternally loving God, You have given Your people a covenant, seen most fully in Jesus Christ. When we have failed, You have trusted us with new beginnings. When we have been less than You call us to be, You touch us again with mission..."

around the CONFERENCE



Sharon UMC Consecrates New Sanctuary

Sharon United Methodist Church, Holden Beach, consecrated its new sanctuary Sunday, May 23. Bishop Alfred Gwinn, Jr., Resident Bishop for the North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church preached and led the church in the consecration of the building and worship space. The new sanctuary will more than double the church's worship capacity, an increase from 170 to 400 seating capacity, and will allow for the former sanctuary to be renovated into educational space. Pictured are the Reverend Leonard Shepherd, the church's first associate minister, Reverend Travis Owens, SUMC pastor 1955-1956, Reverend Robert Rattz, SUMC pastor 1987-1991, Bishop Al Gwinn, Reverend Eddie Hill, current pastor at Sharon UMC, and the Reverend Tim Russell, Assistant to the Bishop and former District Superintendent of the Wilmington District.

Rockingham District Day Apart

The Rockingham District, the Rev. Leonard E. Fairley, District Superintendent, recently held a Day Apart with a tour of Charleston, SC. Clergy and laity from the district spent the day together "in koinonia," noted the Rev. Bill Cummings, chair of the District Committee on Superintendancy. The day's events included a boat-tour, historic bus tour, and the opportunity to dine together.



NC Boys Choir Sings at Wesley Memorial UMC

The 32-member North Carolina Boys Choir gave two performances at Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington on May 15-16. They also led the 11:00 worship service on the following Sunday morning. The congregation was richly blessed by their musicianship and their skill level of singing several languages from memory. Saturday evening's concert featured works by Pergolesi, Purcell, Haydn, and John Rutter. The choir also presented Charles Davidson's musical memorial "I Never Saw Another Butterfly." Davidson set his music to the poetry written by children of the Terezin concentration camp during World War II. "It is extremely remarkable how nine, ten, and eleven year old boys rise to the challenge of performing such difficult works as Haydn's "Creation" and Leonard Bernstein's "Mass", said Dr. Bettsy Curtis, Director of Music Ministries at Wesley Memorial. The Boychoir consists of 32 boys who range in age from nine to fifteen years. The Chamber Choir travels with them and has tenors and basses comprised of young men and adults, high school age and up.



Older Adults Honored at Rehoboth UMC

On May 16, Rehoboth UMC in Henderson (Durham District) celebrated Older Adult Sunday. Those present at the celebration included: (L-R) Elizabeth Spivey, Catherine Crowder, Linda Pauley, Ruby Page Futrell, Mertis Edwards, Helen Barnes, Louise Drake, and Dorothy Drake. Those absent: Horace Barnes, Janice Harrell, and Robert Harrell. The celebration recognized the contributions of older adults through their life experiences, desire to share their past, freedom to live their faith, and time to volunteer and share their talents. Their experiences can help all seeking God's call in new times, new settings, and new stages of life. A special display included an oak tree, representing leaves of strength and wisdom, and, as an extra surprise, there were photos of each in their "younger days," supplied by their children. The Older Adult celebration continued Sunday night with a Gospel Sing by The Jenkins Family. A love offering was collected for Pine Forest Rest Home in Potecasi, a non-profit with beds for 23 residents.



NC Wesleyan Math Professor Honored

Dr. Bill Yankosky, professor of mathematics at NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, is among 40 professors nationwide who have been honored with the 2010 Exemplary Teacher Award from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. The award was presented to Yankosky during the college's May commencement ceremony.

In his presentation, Dr. Jay Stubblefield, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College said, "His teaching stands out for its clarity and for his approachability and readiness to help his students. He has set a high mark with several very original student math/honors projects that have subsequently been published. Undergraduate research publications are fairly rare and these obviously attest to the commitment of these students, and also to his dedication and inspiration. His recent appointment as Director of the Honors program was widely praised and the advising that he undertakes there is informed by his teaching experience."

Pictured above are Yankosky, center, standing with graduates Benjamin Lilley, left, a mathematics major, summa cum laude, and recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award; and Elena Pisarik, an accounting and business administration major, summa cum laude, and recipient of the President's Cup Award.

Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

New NC Conference headquarters dedicated



On Sunday, June 6, the new NC Conference headquarters were dedicated in Garner. The two-story, 32,000 square foot building is located at 700 Waterfield Ridge Place off of Greenfield Parkway near the intersection of Interstate 40 and Highway 70.

At the dedication, Cashar Evans, trustee chair, reported that construction of the \$5 million building incurred no debt. It was paid for from the sale of the old headquarters in Raleigh and adjoining property.

The building includes a covered front entrance, three conference rooms, a video studio, and outdoor eating tables behind the building. In addition, the Dixon Chapel and Meeting Room can seat 150.

The property is approximately 15 acres total with around 10 usable acres for this building, driveway, parking and room for future expansion if needed. The remaining acres may be developed into walking trails or kept as natural areas.

Air testing was completed in mid-June as part of the application process for certification as LEED compliant by the US Green Building Council. Notice of certification is expected in late Fall.

Following Annual Conference, the move was made to the new building. All offices re-opened on June 28 in the new Garner headquarters.



North Carolina Conference
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Staff phone extensions and email are unchanged.



Dixon family members attending the dedication included (L-R) Casey Samuel Burroughs, grandson; Christy Dixon, daughter; Allyson Barnes, niece; Amy Dixon, daughter; Cindy Dixon, wife; and Joshua McMurtrey, son.



The Dixon Chapel is designed to incorporate natural imagery.

(All photos this page by Bill Norton.)

Dixon Chapel and Meeting Room

The largest room and chapel, which can seat 150, was dedicated to the ministry of the late Dr. Sam Dixon, a clergy member of the North Carolina Conference, who died while on assignment with the United Methodist Committee on Relief in Haiti when an earthquake hit on January 12.

During the dedication of the Dixon Chapel and Meeting room, Bishop Al Gwinn prayed that the room would "serve as a symbol of who Sam Dixon was and his ministry, a place of peace where the heart thinks of Christ, a place of love—unconditional love, a place of service—Sam gave himself for the cause of Christian service throughout the world." Bishop Gwinn said Dixon's "work did not end in the rubble (Haiti)—it was a beginning that we did not recognize—it is right and proper that we dedicate this room to our brother Sam Dixon." During the service, two of Sam's sisters, Marie Hein and Mildred Dixon offered a response for the family.

Chapel design

The chapel's design incorporates natural imagery, using flooring patterned after tree bark and a hand-designed table made from raw wood and tinted to bring forth the green hues of nature. A wall of windows invites views of the grove of trees outside. Towering over the central table is a large wooden cross with wedged notches symbolizing the suffering of Christ, "the One who carries our grief and bears our sorrows."

Flanked on each side of the cross are stands designed out of metal, supporting large candles. The candlesticks are made of carved raw wood wrapped in metal vine leaves, symbolizing the fruit of the vine that gives life and hope through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Three large basins sit to the right of the table—offering double meaning—basins hosting the waters of purification/ baptismal waters and also a reminder of the first miracle of Jesus—the abundance of grace made possible through Christ.

The chapel was designed by Rick Clayton and created by Jeffrey Hurr, Iron Innovations, Inc.

Stations of the Cross

On the wall of the Dixon Chapel are metal sculptures marking the scenes of Christ's suffering and death. The custom of meditating upon Jesus' final journey to the Cross dates back to the Middle Ages.

The 14 sculptures were created by artist John Sylvestri, who lives in Croix Des Bouquets, outside of Port au Prince, Haiti. He used all recycled materials to create the stations.



Mildred Wofford Dixon (left), mother of Sam Dixon, and one of his sisters, Mildred Lee Dixon (right), admire the metal wall sculptures in the Dixon Chapel.



Bishop Al Gwinn and Cashar Evans



Over 150 attended the building dedication.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

School of Christian Mission	2
Dr. William J. Abraham preaching and teaching	4
Help Thy Neighbor: Disaster Recovery Focus	7-13
October Bible Study	14-15
Youth ACS Event	20

Bishop Gwinn and Conference Cabinet traveling to Haiti in November for work on construction project at Ryan Epps Home for Children

Bishop Al Gwinn and the Conference Cabinet will travel to Haiti in November to construct the next phase at the Ryan Epps Home for Children (REHC) in Michaud, Haiti. All funds raised in the coming weeks will be used to purchase construction materials. Each Cabinet member is paying their own way to Haiti.

On Friday, Sept. 17, a concert featuring "Musicians4Missions" (M4M) to raise money for materials for use in constructing the next phase of the REHC will begin at 7 p.m. at Garner UMC, 201 Methodist Drive. Read more about this event at music4haiti.org. The M4M volunteers are available for additional fundraising events to support the children of Haiti.

Included in the construction that will begin in November will be dormitories, kitchen/fellowship area and living quarters for the director and staff.

REHC benefits over 30 children who have either lost their parents or who have been signed over by their parents to REHC as a result of an inability to support them.

The purpose of REHC is to "change the lives of the people of Haiti by changing its children." Learn more by visiting the REHC website at www.ryanepshome.com. The staff provides Christian



For more information:
ryanepshome.com music4haiti.org

teaching and strong moral infrastructure for the children so they might be the future leaders of Haiti.

Additionally, REHC will provide a center of worship to the community of Michaud and a school for up to 180 children. The REHC is made up of a generation of Haitian people who recognize this value system and desire to pass it along through their work and dedication.

Support of REHC comes primarily through donations and is led by a group of people in the eastern North Carolina area including members of Horne Memorial UMC, Clayton. Through their leadership and the support of many people, the first phase of the REHC building has been accomplished, creating the worship facility, the school and showers and bathroom facilities.

Donations from churches to purchase materials will be accepted Friday evening, Sept. 17 as well anytime between now and November.

Anyone unable to attend the concert can forward a donation directly to the NC Conference, P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260-0053. Make checks payable to "NC Conference/Raleigh Area" and note "Advance #S00245" on the memo line. One-hundred percent of donations received to this Advance number go directly to the Ryan Epps Center.

Connectional Ministries staff ready with reorganized ministry from new location

The Connectional Ministries staff, reorganized and re-tooled, is ready for the task of transforming existing congregations.

When the Rev. Jeff Severt became the director of New Faith Communities in March, the focus of his efforts was determined to be the development of new congregations and faith communities. The work of revitalizing existing churches was redirected to the Office of Connectional Ministries.

The Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization, and others on the team bring many years of experience as clergy and lay members of The United Methodist Church, in spiritual formation, mission, leadership development and organizational development. In addition they are preparing for the new roles through studies and seminars.

See "NC Conference Connectional Ministries," page 5

PHOTO: The Rev. Carol Goehring, (on left) Connectional Ministries/Church Revitalization executive director; and staff coordinators Chris Harman, (on right) Christian Formation, and Steve Taylor, (photo on page 5) Outreach, are completing coaching training and will coach pastors and congregations, and train others to serve as coaches in an effort to offer a long-term, positive approach for churches in "unrealized" or "realized" decline. A Leadership team coordinator, yet to be hired, will also be trained in coaching. These four will form a team, as a group or individually, to serve the needs of the local church by equipping the church to do the work of ministry.



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PERIODICALS



Participants during the Saturday worship and Service of Holy Communion. Photos by Bill Norton.



The Rev. Leonard Fairley teaching For the Love of God: John's Letters during the School of Christian Mission.

School of Mission has theme of Faith, Hope, Love in Action

By Georgia Pilkington *

The NC Conference School of Christian Mission was held July 21-24 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. The theme for the school was "Faith, Hope, Love in Action." According to evaluations received, it was the "best school ever."

Mission studies were – The Beauty and Courage of Sudan, led by Joyce Herring and Steve Taylor; Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global

Christianity, led by the Rev. Linda Harris, the Rev. Laura Early, and Sandra Croom; and For the Love of God: John's Letters, led by Rev. Leonard Fairley and Bishop Alfred Gwinn.

The feedback from participants was that study leaders "were superb, sharing interesting information" on each subject.

The classes equip participants to return to their districts and present the study. Participants were given handouts via Internet and classroom

to assist in their preparation. All study leaders received high ratings per evaluations.

Entertainment was provided each night to set the tone for the upcoming study the next day. The Rev. Linda Harris gave a thought-provoking performance of a biblical woman.

Morning sessions were opened with music, prayer and plenaries dedicated to the studies. Music was led by Becky Brock and Tabitha Pate from the Goldsboro District.

Districts set up display tables and worship centers pertaining to the studies. All 12 districts participated in the planning, implementation and attendance at this school.

Of the 197 who attended, there were 70 full-time participants (who attended all 3 studies), and 121 students who took one or two classes.

* Georgia Pilkington served as dean of the North Carolina Conference School of Christian Mission.

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SEJANAM honors women at 22nd Summer Conference

Two Native women were honored as part of the 22nd Annual Southeastern Jurisdictional Native American Ministries' Summer Conference (SEJANAM).

Jessie Mitchell, Lumbee, a life-long resident of Robeson County, North Carolina, and Dr. Anne Marshall, Muscogee Creek, from Holdenville, Oklahoma, were honored.

Mitchell was presented with a certificate of appreciation signed by Bishop Larry Goodpaster, President of the World Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, Jimmy L. Carr, Executive Director of Lake Junaluska, President of SEJANAM, Tracy Pender, and SEJANAM Director, Darlene Jacobs. She also received a resolution acknowledging her labor, work and advocacy for social justice, for other native people and non-native people, for the formation of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Agency for Native American Ministries, and for her "tireless, endless, exemplary and unselfish giving of her time, energy, and resources for the glory of God" in the Southeast Jurisdiction. Additionally, Mitchell was honored with a quilt made by Bertha Locklear of Pembroke and embroidered by Gloria Chavis, also of Pembroke.

Lovingly called 'Ms. Jessie,' she was thrilled at the honor. She stated with great excitement, "I could never do anything without the Lord! This is an immense honor and I am deeply humbled." Ms. Mitchell has

attended all of the 22 SEJANAM Annual Native American Summer Conferences, by any means possible.

"Ms. Jessie is a wonderful woman of God and I'm thrilled that she is finally being recognized for all she has given to the Church and Indian communities" said a conference attendee.

"She is a great role model to learn and live by," said Daphne Strickland, newly elected Vice Chair of SEJANAM.

During the same service, Dr. Anne Marshall was recognized for extraordinary leadership and commitment as a Native American woman and leader to The United Methodist Church, Native American Ministries and diligent support of SEJANAM.

Keynote guest speaker for the Summer Conference was Rev. Leonard John, from Fairbanks, Alaska. An enrolled member of the Kligit Tribe, he is a Vietnam veteran and has served as a tribal councilman with Kligit and Haida Central Council in Juneau, Alaska for 10 years.

One special addition to the Sunday worship service was the inter-tribal Native American Children's Choir which consisted of Mississippi Choctaw, Cherokee, and Lumbee youth.

Additional guest speakers were Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, Mississippi Annual Conference, Bishop Jimmy Jones, and Dr. Evelyn Laycock.

Music was provided by the Kituwah Children from Cherokee, the Mississippi Choctaw and Youth in Christ from Maxton.



Jessie Mitchell, Lumbee, a 98 year old life-long resident of Robeson County, was recognized for her work and advocacy for social justice, for other native people and non-native people, for the formation of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Agency for Native American Ministries and for her "tireless, endless, exemplary and unselfish giving of her time, energy, and resources for the glory of God" in the Southeast Jurisdiction. In addition to a certificate of appreciation, Mitchell was honored with a quilt made by Bertha Locklear of Pembroke and embroidered by Gloria Chavis, also of Pembroke. Mitchell has attended all 22 Summer Conferences.

Jacobs resigns from SEJANAM to become director of RCCCC

Darlene Jacobs, director of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Agency on Native American Ministries (SEJANAM) at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, recently announced her resignation in order to accept a position as director of Robeson County Church and Community Center (RCCCC).

"Darlene has done an exceptional job for six years as the Director of SEJANAM," said Jimmy L. Carr, Executive Director of Lake Junaluska. "After SEJANAM became incorporated into Lake Junaluska during the SEJ reorganization plan, we worked tirelessly to perfect the organization and to strengthen Lake Junaluska's ministry. Darlene will be greatly missed..."

Her new position is full-time in an ecumenical setting, devoted to the celebration of all ethnicities. RCCCC coordinates community and social

assistance services in cooperation with local congregations in a racially diverse region. The county is one of the poorest counties of its population size in the U.S.

An Advance for Christ through the UMC's General Board of Global Ministries, the RCCCC provides tutoring, adult education, emergency assistance, housing repair, literacy training, and other programs. RCCCC has also helped to develop of other social justice-related programs in the county, independent of the center, such as a transportation service, rape crisis center, voter registration program, community action center, and a battered women's program.

Jacobs received her Bachelor's degree in sociology from UNC at Pembroke and her Master's degree in applied sociology from the University of Oklahoma in Norman. She was the director of SEJANAM for six years.

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Forms now online for NCC 2012 General/Jurisdictional delegate nominees

The Rev. Jerry Bryan, conference secretary, has announced that the election for 2012 General and Jurisdictional delegates will be conducted at the 2011 Annual Conference. The Delegate Nomination Forms are now on-line along with information relating to the nomination process and the election preparation for 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

Information and forms are available by clicking on "Resources" on the conference website nccumc.org. Select the "2012 Delegate Nominations." At the end of the introductory information are links to the clergy and laity forms.

Laity nominees must have been a member of a local UM church within

the bounds of the NC Conference for at least 2 years and active for 4 years.

Persons under the age of 18 can serve as delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

Clergy persons are reminded that only deacons and elders in Full Connection are eligible to be nominated as clergy nominees.

Clergy are asked to be sure that the laity of their church(es) are also made aware of the nomination process and that they may submit forms if they are interested.

Nomination forms will be accepted until April 8, 2011. They will be posted online and listed alphabetically. For questions, contact the Conference Secretary at 800-849-4433, ext. 222.

Faith and Tech Blog offers tips and ideas to enhance ministry

The Communications Committee and the Information Technology Committee of the NC Conference are teaming up to provide the clergy and laity of the Conference with the new Faith and Tech blog, designed to make church ministries more effective and church leaders and employees more comfortable with new technology.

The focus will be particularly on tools that are free and easy to use. Contributors come from conference committees and others with technology expertise. Please subscribe and feel free to contribute by commenting in the blog. New articles will be posted on Mondays and Thursdays.

The blog is available at <http://faithandtech.nccumc.net/>.

10-Fold: Making global connections

10-Fold is about multiplying ministry and mobilizing passionate people to stand up and be counted for the causes they believe in. The event will launch on Oct. 10 and last for ten days.

Every day will focus on a different project supported through The Advance, the designated giving arm of The United Methodist Church. The goal is to gain the support of 10,000 people for each of the 10 projects.

To learn more, visit <http://www.10-fold.org/>.

Dr. William J. Abraham to preach and teach during Order of Elders gathering

Dr. William J. Abraham, considered by many clergy to possibly be the most-in-demand theologian to preach and teach throughout The United Methodist Church today, will address the Order of Elders of the North Carolina Conference on Tuesday, Sept. 14 at Nashville UMC in Nashville.

The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments, continue with a Service of Holy Communion, with Abraham preaching, and move to a lecture by Abraham on the content of his sermon, lunch (box lunches will be available for \$5), a Q/A with Abraham, and concluding comments.

The Albert Cook Outler Professor of Wesley Studies at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, TX, Abraham will be on sabbatical at the University of Notre Dame during the next academic year.

He was born in Northern Ireland in 1947. In 1970, he graduated from the Queen's University of Belfast (BA) and, in 1973, from Asbury Theological Seminary (M.Div.).

In 1977, Abraham earned the D.Phil. from Regent's Park College, Oxford University. He has taught at Seattle Pacific University in Seattle, WA. Since 1985, he has held endowed chairs -- the McCreless and Outler chairs -- at the Perkins School of Theology at SMU.

Abraham has authored many books, including: "Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation," "John Wesley for Armchair Theologians," "Logic of Renewal," "Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology," "Waking from Doctrinal Amnesia," "The Logic of Evangelism," and "Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism."

He is an ordained elder in the Southwest Texas Conference and a member of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns of The United Methodist Church.

Unity Dialogue continues Sept. 13, discussion moderated by bishop

All laity and clergy are invited to attend the Monday, Sept. 13 meeting of The Unity Dialogue, on the Church and homosexuality, which will take place at the North Carolina Conference Building (700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner).

The dialogue will begin at 6 p.m. and conclude at 8 p.m. The meeting is open to anyone interested in this theological dialogue.

During the meeting, Holy Communion will be celebrated; Bishop Al Gwinn will moderate a discussion of "An Unworkable Theology" by Dr. Philip Turner (see www.anglicanuse.org/AnUnworkableTheology.pdf); and the purpose of The Unity Dialogue will be considered (see www.viewpointlearning.com/about/rules.shtml and www.viewpointlearning.com/about/dialogue.shtml).



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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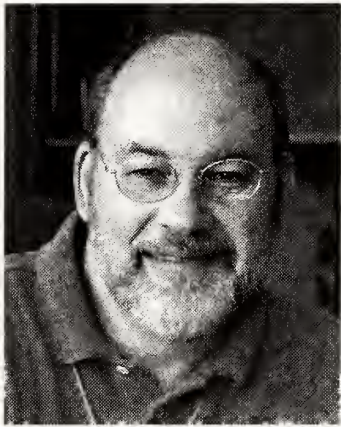
Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

NC Conference Connectional Ministries staff retooled From page 1

The vision of the NC Conference points toward "healthy congregations and effective leaders."

"The Connectional Ministries team is ready to assist congregations and leaders with processes of vision discernment, strategic planning, assessment of strengths, and ministry development," Goehring said.

"The team will provide coaching to encourage the congregation to remain focused on desired outcomes." She emphasizes that the work of the Connectional Ministries team with local congregations



Steve Taylor

will "reflect a commitment to see the church through the stages of growth or change."

"In the process, the staff leaders will equip other leaders to be facilitators of transformation and coaches for other pastors and churches," she said.

"In addition, they are available to equip church leaders in fulfilling their roles and strengthening the church's

ministries." Goehring said.

In July, Christine Harman joined the conference staff as Christian Formation Team coordinator.

Steve Taylor is the Outreach Team coordinator, and the Leadership Team coordinator has not yet been named.

In addition to coaching church leaders through transformation, the team coordinators will work with the Conference committees in their areas of ministry. "The new staff structure parallels the Conference structure adopted in 2008. Like the Connectional Table, the staff structure features four ministry areas: Christian Formation, Leadership, Outreach and Stewardship. Christine Dodson,

Conference treasurer, serves as staff liaison to the Stewardship Team committees," Goehring said.

Pastors or members of congregations in the NC Conference may call any of the coordinators or Rev. Goehring to discuss possibilities for maximizing the congregation's potential.

The Connectional Ministries staff, along with other conference staff, began work in the new United Methodist Building in Garner on June 28.

The toll free or WATS number remains the same, 800-849-4433.

The primary telephone number has changed to (919) 779-6115.

Staff e-mail addresses and extension numbers remain the same.

NC Conference Connectional Ministries: Transforming Congregations

By Carol Goehring *

Luke 5:5 says, "Lord, we have worked all night long, and have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."

We know that story, of fishermen who are discouraged after unproductive time at sea. How many of our churches tell the same story? The congregations are struggling to make sense of the fact that they work hard, they give of their time, talent and treasure, and still, the church is in a season, it seems, of limited growth or decline.

Jesus calls the disciples to let down the nets, and the message is a threefold revelation:

1. Trust him. Submit to his plan.
2. There are fish to be caught, even though our recent experience might tell us otherwise.
3. Methods we have used before may not be effective for such a time as this.

When the Office of Congregational Development became the Office of New Faith Communities in March, the role of church revitalization shifted to Connectional Ministries.

With its new structure and staff, and a focus on aligning with the vision of the Conference, The North Carolina Conference Office of Connectional Ministries is living into the vision of "healthy congregations and effective leaders...making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The Office of Connectional Ministries offers this process for the transformation of existing congregations, asking that the congregations embrace these steps:

1. Continuous learning experience for clergy & lay leadership
 - a. Incubators, example of one model of a covenant group that

holds each other accountable for spiritual growth, personal piety, study, and leadership for local church transformation.

- b. Other experiences of shared learning may be considered
2. Commitment to prayer and spiritual disciplines.
 3. Consultation
 - a. Congregational Assessment (may use the NCC Congregational Health Assessment based on the "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations," by Bishop Robert Schnase for self-assessment and other tools may be used for ministry audit and further evaluation of current reality)
 - b. Undercover worshiper (mystery guest)
 - c. Demographic report
 - d. Asset Mapping for the church and the community
 - e. Focus: values/mission/vision
 - f. MAP, a Ministry Action Plan
 4. Coaching
 - a. Clergy coach
 - b. Congregational coach
 - c. Provide sustained support and encouragement for implementation of plan
 5. Celebrating and re-assessing

Fast-FAQs

WHO:

- The pastor's involvement is crucial. If the church has staff leadership, including as many as possible in the process of discernment and delivery is desirable.
- Lay leadership also is required if transformation is to occur.
- Consultants may be Conference Connectional Ministries staff or persons trained and equipped by Conference staff.
- Coaches may be Conference Con-

nectional Ministries staff or persons certified through Passion in Partnership.

WHAT:

- Incubators typically provide opportunity for learning, honing leadership skills, and loving God at deeper levels. Most groups meet a day each month for 12 months.
- Commitment to prayer assures alignment with God's will.
- Consultation resources are many and will be selected as appropriate to the context. In most cases, the process will include Appreciative Inquiry and collaborative work of pastor and laity.
- Coaching is a way of "coming alongside" the pastor and/or the congregation's leadership team to provide encouragement, support and accountability.

WHEN:

- The process is outlined as a linear progression through five steps. Some steps may be approached concurrently, and some contexts will require more work to overcome specific challenges. These options will affect the time estimated for transformation, as will the complexity and size of the congregation.
- Engaging in the full scope of the process is strongly recommended. It is estimated that the work of transformation, when results may be celebrated as the congregation lives into God's plan for the church, is about two years.

WHY:

The Church is the Body of Christ in the world today, entrusted with the gospel, called to make disciples and to change the world.

Congregations are unique organisms, and each one is purposed for impacting her context with the light and love of Jesus Christ. As the culture changes, the church also must change to connect with people within and beyond the congregation. Rediscovering purpose, developing relevant ministries and reflecting God's vitality are the goals of this Conference initiative to the local church.

Drawing from the stories and strengths of congregations and leaders, lay and clergy, in the NCC, facilitators of this process will be equipped and sent forth to revitalize congregations all over eastern North Carolina.

- The UMC is now in the 3rd generation of practicing growth through transfer of membership, rather than disciple-making.
- NC is the 4th fastest growing state in the nation, and our church growth does not reflect that trend.
- Attitudes toward the Church, generally, have shifted in the last 30-40 years. Indifference is wide-spread, as well as, disillusionment.

And yet,

- Methodism began as a renewal movement, and theologically it remains a potential force for making the world a better place.
- Our connection provides the opportunity for sharing resources and accomplishing great things for God.
- The NCC holds a position of relative strength in the denomination, offering hope through the vitality of new and existing faith communities.

* The Rev. Carol Goehring is executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

CO+Mission Weekend planned for youth, young adults

Registration is open for CO+Mission Weekend, Oct. 1-3. This is a mission engagement weekend for youth, young adults, and youth workers sponsored by St. Paul UMC, Rocky Mount, the Rocky Mount District, and the Conference Office of Outreach Ministry.

The weekend will include worship featuring the Rev. Laura Early and Dr. Marty Cauley, tool and skill training, and a day of mission work with low-income homeowners sponsored by Habitat for Humanity.

Registration is \$69 per person for two nights lodging, all meals on Saturday, breakfast on Sunday, worship, and more. For additional information, details, or to register visit www.comissionweekend.com.

Register by Sept. 10 and entire team also gets free CO+Mission t-shirts. Registration is limited.

SACS reaffirms accreditation of North Carolina Wesleyan College

"Reaffirmed!"—the word that North Carolina Wesleyan College has been waiting to hear—arrived in a letter to Wesleyan President James A. Gray III from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The word indicates that Wesleyan continues to be accredited by the Commission to award baccalaureate degrees, following a rigorous self-inspection and peer review carried out over 18 months.

"It's one thing, internally, to feel that you're doing a good job, but it's something else to be recognized by your peers," said Wesleyan President James A. Gray III. "We won't accept complacency, though," he added. "The point is not to get a pat on the back but for us to use this as a stimulus to become even better."

Vel Johnson, Wesleyan's board of trustees chairman, said, "The board of trustees and the school leadership have a shared vision of Wesleyan's becoming America's next great college, and this is a confirming step in that process. We appreciate the tremendous effort of the entire Wesleyan community during the SACS reaffirmation process to articulate the college's commitment to the highest standards to achieve educational excellence."

Wesleyan's main campus is in Rocky Mount, and the college also offers an Adult Degree Program there and at sites in the Triangle and Goldsboro.

Specific areas of Wesleyan that SACS examined included the college's administrative structure, faculty qualifications, course work for degrees, learning resources, student support services, financial and physical resources, general education components and more.

At the heart of the evaluation

was an assessment of Wesleyan's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a major requirement for reaffirmation. "The QEP describes a college's plan to enhance student learning," Stubblefield explained. "Each college that seeks reaffirmation of accreditation is required to develop a QEP. Wesleyan's plan is entitled 'Getting Information Skills Today.'"

Directed by Reference and Instruction Librarian James Parrigin, Wesleyan's QEP focuses on strengthening students' ability to use technology to locate and evaluate information and use it effectively and ethically. Students learn what are often called "information literacy" skills through courses in subjects they study to complete their major. Ultimately, the QEP prepares students for effective participation in today's information-centered society.

Participation in the SACS accreditation process is voluntary and is considered a form of self-regulation. The review requires a college to undergo an extensive and intense self-examination as well as a peer review every 10 years, with an interim review every five years. The process assesses an educational institution's strengths and weaknesses, and makes recommendations for improvement, if necessary, in order to assure quality in higher education.

As stated in the SACS Commission on Colleges Principles of Accreditation, "the process stimulates evaluation and improvement, while providing a means of continuing commitment to the Commission's principles and philosophy of accreditation." Wesleyan was first accredited by the Commission in 1966.

SACS is a regional accreditation organization, with headquarters in Decatur, Ga., that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

MU approved for continued listing as United Methodist-related institution

Dr. M. Elton Hendricks, president of Methodist University in Fayetteville, announced that Methodist University was approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church for continued listing, without qualification, as a United Methodist-related institution.

The approval was based on the recommendation of the Commission on Institutional Review. The University was evaluated on the aspects that follow: institutional integrity, program quality, sound management and financial health, and church relatedness.

According to an excerpt from the University Senate's report, "Only rarely has the team seen an institution such as Methodist University where the traditions and principles of The United Methodist Church so thoroughly permeate the institution. The University is rightly proud of the many student organizations which are related to its mission as a United Methodist institution."

Over 300 students participate weekly in organizations and activities, such as Bible Study for male

and female students, worship held Wednesday at 11 a.m. throughout the academic year, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), the largest student organization on campus.

The University sponsors a praise and worship band, "Common Ground," and One Voice," an international Gospel choir. The Rev. Dr. Michael Safley, Jan Turner, and Sam Morrison have organized two spring break mission trips for work teams of up to 16 students to go to Belize and the Bahamas.

Additionally, the University offers Pastor's Certificates, which provide \$1,000 scholarships to any United Methodist student from the pastor's congregation. The general education curriculum requires that students complete two religion courses and a church leadership minor has been implemented for students interested in lay church leadership training.

According to the report, "Much of the relationship [with the United Methodist Church] is attributable to the University president, who has made the relationship important during his years at the institution."

Materials available to help Boards of Ordained Ministry, District Committees

By Vicki Brown *

A variety of resources for those who work with candidates for ordained ministry are now available on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Web site.

"We wanted to make training materials and other resources easily accessible in a variety of formats," said the Rev. Sharon Rubey, GBHEM's director of Candidacy and Conference Relations. "Also, using the Web site rather than printing the materials means we can quickly post new materials as developed and more easily update materials with any changes." Any changes in the process approved by General Conference delegates result in Book of Discipline changes that must be reflected in candidacy materials.

The resources – which include PowerPoint presentations, training outlines and models with related materials for those events, and frequently asked questions about the various aspects of candidacy are all available from the Boards of Ordained Ministry page, www.gbhem.org/bom.

"Most of these resources have been used during both national and regional training events for Boards of Ordained Ministry, candidacy mentors, candidacy registrars, and district Committees, and we are frequently asked for copies," Rubey said.

"This puts all these materials just a click away for those who work with candidates for ordained ministry," she said.

Among the most-requested materials are a PowerPoint presentation that gives detailed instructions for the online candidacy enrollment system, a PowerPoint that highlights how a candidate relates to various annual conference officials and committees as he or she works toward provisional status, and frequently asked questions about the process.

* Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

HELP THY NEIGHBOR

DISASTER RECOVERY: IT COULD BE YOUR HANDS

By Sam Loy *

"Help Wanted! Apply Within!"

This might be an appropriate ad for disaster work teams. (These are teams that respond three months or more after a storm to help with recovery efforts. They usually have the benefit of showers and hot meals and stable places to sleep.) What would be the payoff of such a job? One benefit of such a job would be a great view of the Kingdom of God at work and the great sense of the joy that comes from being a part of it.

It could be the wonder of seeing a 70-year-old woman named MeMe in Wiggins, MS, two years after Katrina, get excited as two dump truck loads of debris (once the back half of her house) are hauled away, and as the holes in her remaining roof are repaired, and hope of a future is restored.

It could be experiencing the welcome of a church and a community in Atwood, AL five years after a hurricane and finding many houses are still not repaired. It could be having the mayor of the town declare you and the rest of the team honorary citizens.

It could be finding that you can do far more than you ever expected, working with other volunteers who are skilled.

It could be seeing a family move into their house after living in a small travel trailer for three years.

It could be finding that sitting with a home owner, depressed by too much to do and too little money to do it, is as important as the rarest of construction skills. It could be watching the transformation of lives as well as homes.

Jesus told his followers that we would do even greater thing than he in being his hands and feet in the world. This is the witness of those who participate on disaster work teams. If and when the next disaster happens, apply within yourself and dare to believe that God can and will use

See "Disaster recovery," page 9

"HANDS have been the biggest asset that anybody—if you've ever been flooded, hands are what a person needs. You don't even know what you need financially but you know you need hands because your mind is working so much faster than your hands can keep up....Without their [volunteers'] hands we could have never gotten it done, just never.

Just knowing that somebody cared... If this—if this flood had happened to just one person in our community, we could have all joined together and took care of that one person or five families or whatever. But when it's every house for a twelve mile stretch, nobody has time to help anybody. You are so busy trying to get—just keep your head above the water to help yourself."

- Interview with Jenny Cavanaugh
by Charles Thompson, Dec. 8, 1999
(K-0281), in the Southern Oral
History Program Collection (#4007),
Southern Historical Collection,
Wilson Library, University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill.

VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL TO CONFERENCE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

By Bill Gross *

The Atlantic Basin remains on track for an active hurricane season, according to the scheduled seasonal outlook update issued in August by NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service. Across the entire Atlantic Basin for the whole season – June 1 to Nov. 30 – NOAA's updated outlook is projecting, with a 70 percent probability, a total of:

- 14–20 named storms (top winds of 39 mph or higher).
As this paper went to press, there were already six named storms. Predictions for named storms include:
- 8–12 hurricanes (top winds of 74 mph or higher), of which:
- 4–6 could be major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, 5; with winds of at least 111 mph)

With the season's peak just around the corner – late August through October – the need for preparedness plans is essential. "August heralds the start of the most active phase of the Atlantic hurricane season and with the meteorological factors in place, now is the time for everyone living in hurricane prone areas to be prepared," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

Local church disaster plans

Each year about this time, congregations across the NC Conference review their

See "Volunteers are vital," page 8

REACHING OUT IN TIMES OF DISASTER

VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS *from page 7*

local church plan for disaster preparedness.

A guide, "Protecting the Church – Preparing a Plan Before Disaster Strikes," developed by the NC Conference Disaster Response Committee, provides suggestions to local churches in developing specific preparedness plans to respond to major crises, including those that are weather-related.

The committee, composed of representatives from each of the 12 districts, works cooperatively with Conference staff, the United Meth-

odist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and United Methodist Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM) to prepare the annual conference to respond in times of a disaster.

Early Response Teams

The NC Annual Conference has a long history of responding in a multitude of ways in times of disaster. Volunteers from local United Methodist churches across eastern North Carolina provide much needed financial support, donate, pack and transport supplies for health kits and

cleaning buckets, and respond with volunteer recovery teams. United Methodists are often referred to as being the "first in" and "last out" of disaster areas.

One way in particular that the UMC responds is through the ministry of Early Response Teams (ERT's). Created by The United Methodist Church in the mid-1990s, the ministry began and remains today, a cooperative effort between the United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission and annual conference Disaster Response Coordinators.

ERT's are neither a first response group of emergency workers nor a recovery rebuild or repair team; rather they fill a specific need in the early days after a disaster to establish the presence of the church.

Working among federal, state and local agencies, and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), an ERT's mission is to provide a caring, Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster under very specific guidelines that enable a team to be productive and caring while causing no further harm or being a burden to the affected community.

Consisting of seven to 14 people, depending upon the tasks to be performed, Early Response Teams often tarp roofs, remove debris and clean out flooded homes.

ERT's are trained primarily to respond within their local community. However, depending on the size and nature of a disaster, teams may be requested from outside a particular district or from other conferences.

National certification

In early 2007, a covenant was formed between UMCOR and UMVIM and protocols were established as to how and when ERTs are trained and deployed. In May 2009, the protocols were enhanced as part of a national effort to certify Early Response Volunteers across multiple agencies.

Borne out of the lessons learned from 9/11 and the need for volunteers to hold specific credentials in order to enter a disaster site, this new process will enable all Early Response Team Volunteers who attend and pass the appropriate UMCOR training courses, and submit a background check, to obtain national certification to assist following a US disaster.

Classes are taught by authorized UMCOR Trainers and team members receive an UMCOR badge that identifies them as individuals who have received appropriate training and approvals to assist communities in the early days after a major disaster.

In the NC Annual Conference, teams are trained and deployed

according to the UMCOR-UMVIM Protocol and the NC Annual Conference Disaster Response Plan.

In order to qualify for an UMCOR ERT badge, volunteers must complete the basic class, led by an authorized trainer, pass a Safe Sanctuaries background check, and score 70% or higher on the Basic ERT Class quiz. Badges expire after three years, so a recertification course is also offered to train volunteers on recent updates to material and protocols.

Experience has shown to successfully deploy an ERT of seven persons from a local church or district at any given time, at least 30 individuals should be trained as ERTs to compensate for the fact that many will be unavailable due to scheduling conflicts, etc.

Leading up to and during the response to Hurricane Katrina, over 1,000 volunteers in the NC Annual Conference were trained as Early Responders and many others have been trained since. However, many credentials have expired, reducing the number of volunteers available to respond after a disaster.

In order to meet the anticipated demand for both Basic and Recertification ERT training in the NC Annual Conference, 10 individuals recently completed the UMCOR ERT Train-The-Trainer course on July 23-24 at the MERCI Center.

Basic ERT course

The Basic ERT course has traditionally been offered on a quarterly basis at the MERCI Center as part of the UMVIM training ministry. However, both the Basic and Recertification courses can be taught in local churches throughout the conference upon request with a minimum registration of 12 participants.

Those persons interested in serving Christ through the ministry of Early Response in the North Carolina Annual Conference are invited to visit www.nccumvim.org to learn more or to register for an upcoming training session.

Find out more

Visit www.nccumvim.org for information on Early Response Teams, to schedule a class or to register for an upcoming session.

Visit www.hurricanes.gov and FEMA's www.ready.gov for information on preparing your family for hurricane season.

Visit <http://www.merciumc.org/lc-disasterpreparedness.htm> for information on developing a Local Church Disaster Response Plan.

* Bill Gross is NC Conference coordinator of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission.

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THE HANDS OF JESUS — A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Editor's Note: Jo Elaine Harris was on the first district team to visit Mississippi following the destruction from Hurricane Katrina. It was from this visit that the Raleigh District began to send assistance.

By Jo Elaine Harris *

On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf coast, taking lives and obliterating homes, schools and businesses. Large boats washed into yards and cars came to rest in trees. A powerful 40-foot wave swept ashore, totally destroying some homes while filling others with water, dead fish, mud and debris. The wave was so strong it swept personal effects to distances of 10 miles.

Katrina devastated an area equal in size to the British Isles. The damage was so extensive and the needs so great that organization and focus became a priority. We believed that it would be best to consolidate our efforts and focus our teams in Mississippi.

Within days, North Carolina Conference Bishop Al Gwinn and Mississippi Conference Bishop Hope Ward, together with UMCOR, devised a strategy for NCC's response to help rebuild Mississippi.

Each conference district would partner with a specific church and work within a specific area in Mississippi. The Raleigh District partnered

with Heritage UMC in D'Iberville, a suburb of Biloxi. The church building itself sustained only minor damage, so we had a good base camp from which to work.

The congregation had already launched into disaster recovery with the leadership of their pastor, the Rev. David Cumbest. Rev. Cumbest is an experienced disaster responder, which was invaluable to our teams.

I went to Mississippi in September with then Raleigh District Superintendent Ned Hill and Tom Campbell of Raleigh to meet with Cumbest and to assess the situation.

Bishop Ward met us there and together we spent hours touring the area, determining how our teams could respond. Upon our return, we created a DVD that told the stories and interpreted the needs to our District. We provided the DVD to all district churches.

Literally hundreds of our district people started taking Early Response Training and UMCOR Leadership Training, both of which are valuable and necessary. Early response teams need specific training to deal with the unique situations they encounter. Our first trained team arrived on the scene the second week of September.

In January 2006, I led a team of approximately 100 clergy and laity to D'Iberville. This is an unusually large group; however, we wanted to get all our churches involved in the relief work. We felt it was important for leaders to experience first-hand the needs in Mississippi and take their stories to their churches and jobs to get more people involved.

Our large group divided into 10 teams. Teams performed a variety of

See "The hands of Jesus," page 10

EARLY RESPONSE TRAINING

Classes are regularly scheduled for ERT training and to train new trainers as well.

Basic ERT and recertification training courses are typically held at MERCI Center in Goldsboro, but for larger groups, courses can be taught on site at local churches.

For further information on upcoming ERT dates, visit www.nccumvim.org/training.htm



Volunteers attending a BASIC ERT Training class receive instruction on the proper methods for securing and protecting a roof with a tarp.



The home of a storm victim awaits the services of an Early Response Team from the NC Annual Conference.



An Early Response Team secures the edges of a freshly applied tarp to a roof.

DISASTER RECOVERY

from page 7

even you to represent His Kingdom.

You may not have the construction skills needed to reconstruct someone's home, but remember the story of the little boy with the five loaves and two fishes (John 6:8-9).

God has a way of using whatever we are willing to offer to provide for the needs of others. Such is the witness of those who say "Here I am Lord, use me."

Every district in the North Carolina Conference has trained individuals available to organize and lead teams.

For more information contact your district office or the Office for Outreach in the United Methodist Building, 800-849-4433

* The Rev. Sam Loy is chair of the conference Board of Missions.

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SIX WEEKS TO THE STORM — A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

By Barbara Tripp *

Six weeks. That's all, six weeks. Six weeks is how long I had been the disaster response coordinator for the North Carolina Conference.

Six weeks and then Hurricane Floyd came ashore.

Floyd was the most devastating disaster to hit North Carolina since Hurricane Hazel in 1955.

And it was mine to handle.

Experience?

Yes, I had been on many disaster response teams, in and out of North Carolina, but always as the volunteer, the one going to help. Never had I been in a position to ask for help or to organize a recovery effort.

Where does one turn to for help when such a momentous event occurs? Was I supposed to have all the answers? Was I supposed to know exactly what to do?

Are you familiar with the word "panic"?

Fortunately, there were many people around our state and around the country who had the disaster experience to draw from that I needed after Hurricane Floyd.

Several of the Disaster Response Committee members had experience helping after Hurricane Fran just a few years earlier. Our UMCOR committee had people with disaster experience as well. And, new to me, it's embarrassing to admit, was the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

With the support of the Bishop and the Cabinet, I set out on the journey of a lifetime, learning all I could as fast as I could and putting it to use in our conference. There are way too many individuals along the way to try and mention, but I have to lift up UMCOR.

UMCOR was present from the first meeting with the Cabinet to the close-out session three years later. They were there for me at every step along the way: with funds, with mentors, with equipment, with training and with encouragement.

Floyd recovery in the North Carolina Conference continued for five and one half years, but the Conference Disaster Recovery Ministries for Floyd closed and became MERCI.

Now, 10 years later, let me share the advantages of an UMCOR association.

At that first Cabinet meeting after Hurricane Floyd, UMCOR was present at the table with offers of flood buckets, cleaning equipment, funds, consultants and volunteers.

It was a matter of a phone call here and an email there, and the ball was rolling.

In addition to the overwhelming

response from our conference (and the Duke Endowment), UMCOR resources began pouring in. Immediately, UMCOR sent emergency funds, which were then distributed to the six districts directly impacted.

What a joyful sight it was to see truckloads of clean up supplies being delivered to multiple areas along the eastern side of the state.

Volunteers began pouring in (thank God for UMCOR folks!) to handle the massive clean up efforts.

With the immediate response well under way (and sort of under control), we turned the attention to the long-term recovery.

I was privileged to be sent to UMCOR's Annual Disaster Response Academy at the Sager Brown facility in Baldwin, Louisiana. There I was able to meet and talk with people from all over the country with disaster response experience.

I attended classes that walked me through the process from start to finish, with all the components in between.

The educational benefits of UMCOR alone would far surpass anything I had found thus far.

As we started into the recovery period, UMCOR remained by my side. Whenever there was a question, a quick phone call got me the answer. UMCOR consultants were assigned to us and were available on an as-needed basis. In the beginning, they practically lived in North Carolina!

They advised us on setting up offices, helped establish our case work training, and held our hands when things just seemed impossible. And UMCOR provided funding—lots of it! We shared an appeal with the Oklahoma tornados of '99 and were adequately funded for many years of recovery efforts.

I have learned since that UMCOR responds to disasters all over the world. In fact, there is, on average, a response effort approximately every three-and-a-half days. And I have learned that all the dollars donated in response to a specific disaster go to that disaster. Can you believe that 100% of our donations go to the actual cause? One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a special offering that takes care of UMCOR's day-to-day operations.

The disaster response training that was so very valuable to us is offered all the time. The Academy goes on every year, jurisdictional Academies now take place in most areas, and conferences can arrange training by just calling UMCOR and asking for it.

I think it is fair to say that we could not have carried out the recovery from Floyd anywhere near as well without the ever-present help of

UMCOR. As an UMCOR consultant myself now, I know exactly how valuable a little advice can be, how important it is to know what's available and how we can access those resources. Disaster response is just one of UMCOR's many programs designed to "alleviate human suffering." It is one that has meant a lot to the con-

ference. For more information about UMCOR programs and resources go www.umcor.org.

* Barbara Tripp is the former executive director of the NC Conference Disaster Recovery Ministry and MERCI. She currently serves as a disaster response consultant for UMCOR.



In May 2006, a team of 13 Raleigh Wesley Foundation students, alumni, and staff traveled to Heritage UMC in D'Iberville, Miss. to continue rebuilding efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. For the first 16 months following Katrina, the Raleigh District's Second Spring effort had workteams in Miss. literally every week.

THE HANDS OF JESUS from page 9

jobs from mucking out houses and tarping roofs to installing drywall and new floors and everything in between. We helped the Mississippians start the rebuilding process; but more importantly, we listened to their stories, we cried with them, laughed with them, and prayed with them.

Many of the people told us that they believed we represented the presence of Jesus Christ and that we gave them hope. Indeed, we did go to serve our Christ as his hands, feet, and heart on the sacred land of the hurting. We also forged bonds and friendships that will be with us forever; and we were blessed to witness the strength and gratitude of the people in Mississippi.

It has been five years since Katrina; and we have accomplished great things in Mississippi. For the first 16 months following Katrina, the Raleigh District had work teams on the ground literally every week. Since then, we have sent dozens of work teams to continue the work.

In addition to rebuilding countless houses, we helped fund and construct a large warehouse to house supplies and tools needed for the rebuilding process. We also built bunk beds to house the volunteers. Yet, our work is not done. There are still areas that have not been helped.

This last May, I led a team of clergy and laity to work in these areas and to continue our long-term recovery work. We will continue to send teams to help rebuild the coast for as long as the work is there. Without question, the work is oftentimes hard and uncomfortable, but we are the church and we respond to need.

We named our effort Second Spring after a phenomenon that is common on the coast.

When the salt water blows ashore from the ocean, it turns vegetation brown, and the leaves and flowers on trees fall off. However, in a few weeks' time, new foliage and flowers burst forth, giving the appearance of a second spring. It is a time of rebirth and resurrection, a time when life comes from death.

We designed a logo and put it on bright green t-shirts (the color of shirts worn by United Methodist response teams nationwide) for our teams to wear.

To this day, strangers approach us when we wear our shirts to hug us and to thank us for helping them.

Many have said that if it weren't for the church, nothing would have been rebuilt.

* The Rev. Jo Elaine Harris is Raleigh District director of mission.

MERCI CENTER: NEW AGREEMENT WITH UMCOR, NEW STAFF

The 6 Cooperating Depots in the UMCOR Relief Supply Network



By Charlie Gray *

North Carolina has a very appealing climate, and the weather here is a large reason why so many people are moving to live in this area. But this area also has its fair share of severe weather, and it is critical to understand patterns in severe weather to protect the lives and property of its citizens. For this reason, the MERCI Center has made severe weather preparedness a top priority. This preparedness strategy has three main components.

Natural Disaster Response Material Depot

The MERCI Center recently entered into an agreement with UMCOR to become a National Response Depot. Through this agreement, MERCI Center will collect, assemble, pack and store Cleaning Buckets, Health Kits, and School Kits on a year-round basis. When severe weather strikes, MERCI Center will respond within the UMCOR network to ship these materials to areas of need.

Disaster Respond Command Center

The second component of the readiness strategy is the communication role MERCI will play in times of natural disaster. MERCI Center is in the process of upgrading all communication network capabilities to provide state-of-the-art phone and Internet transmission. This communication links will be critical in keeping the people in the NC Conference informed as well as providing a link to receive incoming requests and information outside the conference.

Volunteer Coordination Hub

As its third component, MERCI will act as a hub for people to come together as teams in response to the needs created by a natural disaster. With the command center communication capacities, MERCI Center provides a central location for coordination, assembly and sending of teams. In an effort to support this component, MERCI Center offers UMCOR Early Response Training (ERT) on a year-round basis. Another benefit is the natural disaster equipment stored and maintained at MERCI Center. Mobile Kitchens, Mobile Showers, Travel Trailers, fully equipped First Response Trailers and a Wood Chipper are items that stand ready at MERCI Center to respond in a time of need.

* Charlie Gray is executive director of the MERCI Center.

"WHILE WE HOPE

the time never comes, we are confident at MERCI Center that we can respond within the areas of our responsibility in an organized and effective manner. If you listen to the weather forecasters, it's not a matter of IF but WHEN severe weather will strike our area. We plan to be ready."

— CHARLIE GRAY,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MERCI CENTER

Two new faces are helping reshape MERCI's programs in the Goldsboro-based facility.

MERCI Facility and Program Director

Bill DeBruhl joined MERCI's staff as Facility and Program Director in May. Bill is a native of Kinston and has lived in many areas of eastern North Carolina in his 28 years as an executive with Wachovia Bank. Bill brings a wealth of management experience as well as a significant background in operations and finance.

The best news is Bill is a man deeply rooted in his faith and service to Jesus Christ. "We are excited about Bill coming on board and the management strength he brings to the table," said Charlie Gray, executive director.



Bill DeBruhl

Volunteer Coordinator

Bob Pavone recently joined the MERCI Center team as Volunteer Coordinator replacing Ann Huffman who retired last summer. Bob has done extensive volunteer work with Katrina Survivors, Cystic Fibrosis, Kicks for Kids, Ronald McDonald House, The Lou Brock and Anthony Munoz Foundations, Major League Baseball, The Cancer Society, Lupus Foundation and St. Jude Hospital.

He brings a wealth of creativity and organization to this position. Having owned a marketing agency for many years, Bob developed a network of corporate accounts such as Procter & Gamble, Iams Pet Foods, Elmer's Glue, KFC, and Ronald McDonald House. Bob was chosen "Ohio Small Business Man of the Year," in 2001 and again in 2003. His agency was the recipient of 29 national and international awards for branding and brand development. Bob is a member of Fuquay-Varina UMC.



Bob Pavone

SO THANKFUL

A poem by one helped
by a disaster work team

Little we know about each other, In God's eyes we are Sister and Brother
Being thankful is not hard to do, Knowing God made friends like you
Giving your time for others in need, Doing a good job well indeed
Sharing your love without a cost, Helping those who have truly lost
Taking time away from your home, Missing those you have helped
when you are gone

Feeling the Joy as you have to part, Leaving your Love with all your Heart
Shining your light while saying goodbye, Thanking God not trying to cry
Those you have helped will always be Grateful
With all our Prayers we are so Thankful

— God Bless You, Etna (MeMe) Thomas, 11-14-07

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NC CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE GRID

Developed by the NCC Disaster Response Committee to define roles during the three stages: Preparation, Response, Recovery.

Individual/ Organization	Preparation	Response	Recovery
Local Pastor/ Church Disaster Response Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with congregation about being prepared • Select church coordinator • Establish church response plan • Encourage ER Training • Collect relief supplies • Be trained in disaster • Know local Emergency response personnel and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer your local trained ER Teams • Survey congregation/community for needs • Contact DRC/DS if you have needs beyond the capability of the church • Set up as relief/distribution center if needed (not as shelter) • Communicate with local emergency management personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide housing/meals for volunteers working in your community • Provide directional assistance for teams • Keep DS informed about progress of recovery • Resume pastoral duties as soon as possible
District Coordinator (DRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be trained in Early Response • Attend meetings of conference DR committee • Get to know DS and establish a means of communication for emergencies • Train churches in your district using the Local Church Guide • Arrange training for ER as requested • Encourage collection of emergency supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with pastors in area whose churches are affected by disaster • Offer assistance to partner-district where needed • Check with DS on damage reports • If not affected, volunteer to help with coordination efforts • Meet with Conference DRC to determine response program • Inform MERCI of needs and areas for response supply delivery • Encourage district volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage churches in district to volunteer and/or provide for volunteers • Visit affected area as often as possible to offer hope and support • Communicate needs and concerns for affected area with MERCI • Communicate need for CARE teams
District Superintendent (DS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be trained in response procedures • Establish a communication system with District Coordinator • Make disaster response training a yearly part of a district pastors' meeting • Be aware of CARE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information from pastors/DRC about damage in district • Meet with Bishop/Cabinet/Committee to determine response • Visit affected area as soon as possible after event • Call MERCI with any assistance requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage churches in district to volunteer for recovery efforts • Visit affected area as often as possible to offer hope and encouragement • Have a district pastors' meeting to discuss recovery effort • Debrief pastors
Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (NC DRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know Conference DR plan • Serve as or appoint representative to NC VOAD and NCIDR • Schedule training and organization for DR Committee, Resource Support team and others • Call and preside at meetings of conference DR committee and resourcing local churches • Establish communications with DS and District DRC • Encourage churches and district coordinators to be ER trained • Support district DRC • Contact UMCOR's DC office to request/schedule ER training • Post confirmed ER trainings on NC DR website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with district DRC and DS to determine need • Communicate with NC Conference Connectional Table to coordinate response • Survey damage with DS and DRC • Communicate needs to UMVIM and to MERCI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage church volunteer participation and donations toward recovery • Assist in gathering recovery information • Encourage district to establish links with other relief agencies

FROM THE UMCOR - UMVIM COVENANT

We give thanks that God has raised up UMCOR and UMVIM to coordinate and strengthen the servant leadership of the church for US Disaster Response, and recognize the unique and complementary gifts and grace of these two programs. We affirm that by working collaboratively in the oneness of the Body of Christ they are much more effective and responsive than either can be separately.

Since both UMCOR and UMVIM have the same goal of serving the most vulnerable people affected by disaster, we enter into this covenant in a spirit of cooperation and humility, seeking to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ as we reach out to those in need.

Read more about the covenant partnership at <http://bit.ly/bl6FVX>

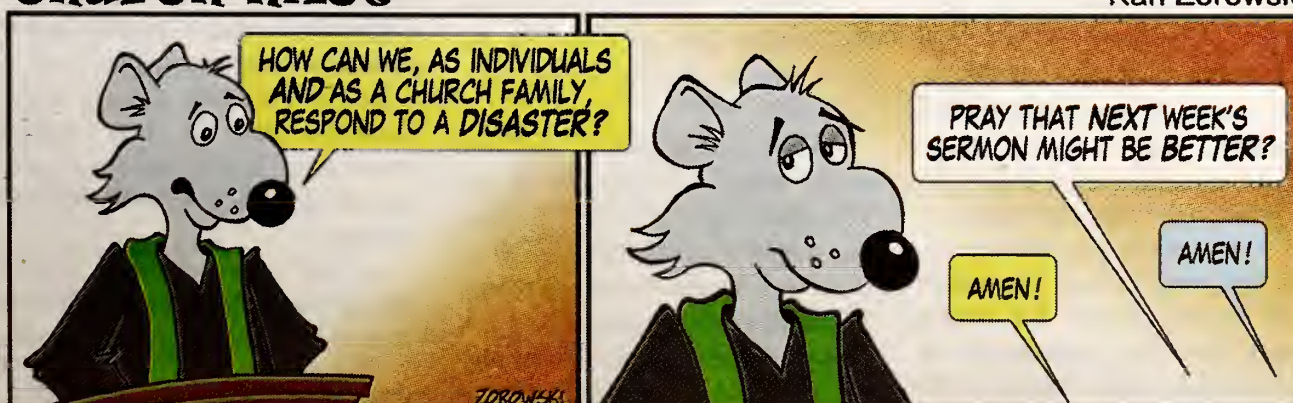
NC CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE GRID

Continued from page 12.

Individual/ Organization	Preparation	Response	Recovery
Bishop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have cabinet trained by UMCOR at least every 4 years Encourage District Superintendents to have disaster response programs annually at district pastors' meetings Support and encourage collections of emergency response materials and donations Support efforts to fund DRC & MERCI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify UMCOR immediately of disaster needs Tour damaged areas as soon as possible Meet with Cabinet, Disaster Response Committee and UMCOR to determine course of action for response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage conference to participate in response and recovery efforts both physically and financially Tour damaged areas whenever possible to offer hope and support Provide assistance for local pastors in disaster areas
MERCI Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and store emergency response materials, encourage local churches to do the same Assist the Conference Disaster Response Committee in training early response teams (ERT) and local church preparation Maintain relations with other disaster response agencies, UMCOR, UMVIM, VOAD and Interfaith organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate ER teams to affected areas at the request of DRC and/or UMVIM Send available emergency response supplies as requested by DRC/DS/local pastors Coordinate volunteers with local communities Communicate needs to conference communications, Bishop and others as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When required, set up long term recovery centers, hire staff, coordinate volunteers, do case management for clients Communicate needs to appropriate agencies Work with local churches and communities for best recovery efforts Train recovery teams
UMCOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide disaster response training for conference personnel & confirmed local trainings Train Cabinets in UMCOR procedure Collect and store emergency response materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides materials support (emergency response supplies) Upon request of the Bishop, provides emergency funding and technical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides continuing technical support when requested Provides available funding upon written request from Bishop
Conference UMVIM Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain list of UMCOR-trained Early Responders & communicate list to UMVIM-SEJ Contact UMCOR's DC office to request/schedule ER training Post confirmed ER trainings on NC UMVIM website Immediately prior to anticipated disaster, alert trained Early Responders of potential deployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with NCC DRC concerning need for ER teams Alert UMCOR-trained Early Responders when NC Conference ER teams are needed Alert UMVIM-SEJ for additional teams as needed Alert conference to need for MERCI communications support & disaster supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate need for UMVIM recovery teams

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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EARLY RESPONSE TEAMS

Early Response Teams (ERTs) are trained volunteers who are able to arrive self-contained and self-sufficient on a disaster scene to provide assistance with making homes "safe, sanitary, and secure". The ERTs "belong" to their annual conference and enter into another conference's disaster zone at the invitation of the Bishop through UMCOR.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

October 3, 2010

Text: Psalm 8
"God's Majesty and Human Dignity"

In most Bibles, there is a heading over Psalm 8.

Usually, it reads something like: "To the leader: according to The Gittith." (Sometimes the heading—technically called a "superscription"—says "to the choirmaster".)

Most students of the Bible think this caption is a direction for the leader of the music at the temple. But, what in the world is a Gittith?

Some scholars indicate that it is a term to describe the music sung in the Village of Gath. (In other words, sing this hymn as it would be sung in Gath.)

Others think it names a musical instrument to be used when singing the psalm. Some say the meaning is unknown.

In the Septuagint (the Greek trans-

lation of the Old Testament), "Gittith" is translated as "winepress." It is this understanding that captured the imagination of many of the ancients of the Christian faith (such as Augustine, Didymus the Blind, and Pseudo-Athanasius—all fourth century).

These early theologians argued that for the Hebrews there would be only one winepress that mattered, the one at the temple in Jerusalem.

Here, just as grapes get their outer skins removed in the winepress, so believers get their outer selves taken off at the altar, in order to stand before God with only one's inner nature—one's true self.

Augustine went on to say that the Word of God comes encased in a human voice, but for the believer the outer case is shed in order for us to hear what God really has to say, not just what some human being speaks.

If we stand before God in our basic self—the outer self gone, is it any wonder that the psalmist posed the question: "What are human beings that you are mindful of them?" (8:4)

The word translated "mindful" literally means "to mark something so it can be recognized." How has God marked us? In one sense, all are marked with the image of God. All humankind is created in the image of God. The Church sometimes refers to baptism as the mark of God's claim.

In this psalm—however it was sung at the temple—there is an awesome overlapping of God's majesty (8:1), creation's magnitude (8:3), humankind's limitation (8:4), humankind's glory and honor (8:5).

Perhaps that is its power.

God is not separated from creation. Creation is not separated from humankind.

Humankind is not separated from God.

It is in that overlap that God relates to us and we to God's creation. So, Psalm 8 ends where it begins: "How majestic is God's name in all the earth!"

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Living Psalms* (Eerdmans), Claus Westerman wrote: "As humanity is created by God but is also limited by sin and death, so the cry to God in the psalms consists essentially of both praise and lament."

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of all majesty..."

October 10, 2010

Text: Psalm 19
"God's Law Sustains"

First, a personal side trip. When I saw that this week's lesson was Psalm 19, my first thought was the joy of remembering that Marcello's "Psalm 19" was the stirring organ recessional that was played as Toni and I moved back up the aisle after our marriage ceremony over 50 years ago. It is still a joyful journey.

There is a lot in this psalm about communication. The heavens are *telling* (18:1) ...the firmament *proclaims* (18:1) ...day to day pours forth *speech* (18:2) ...night to night *declares* (18:2) ...their *voice* goes out (18:4) ...*words* to the end of the earth (18:4) ...*law* (or instruction) of the Lord (18:7) ...*decrees* of the Lord (18:7) ...*precepts* (or teachings) of the Lord (18:8) ...*commandment* (or instruction) of the Lord (18:8) ...*words* of my mouth (18:14) ... *meditation* of my heart (18:14).

These verses seem to emphasize just how hard God works to give God's message to God's people.

Yet, there is truth in what Mark Twain said (at least I think it was Mark Twain), "It's not the parts of the Bible that I don't understand that bother me; it's the parts that I do understand that bother me!"

Of course, we want clarity in hearing God's will, but what are we doing about the part of God's will that is already clear?

What about the part we *do* already understand?

The Israelites (when at their best) placed these communications from God—God's law or *torah*—as the most important thing in their community life.

Even the king was to read and study these teachings every day (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). The king was enjoined not to turn away from these laws, neither to the right nor to the left (Deuteronomy 17:20).

There is great "reward" in keeping the law of God (19:11). In digging around in this psalm, I was aston-

ished to find eight different Hebrew words that sometimes get translated "reward." Their meanings range from "compensation for work done" to "bribe" to "retribution, payback" to "fruit that results from growth" to the word used in Psalm 19:11 that literally means "to put down the heel." Huh?

The psalmist chooses a word that in figurative Hebrew usage means "the last of anything," just as the heel is the last part of the body.

All of this is to say that the reward from following God's law might not produce instant results, but that when the last word is said—when the heel is put down—it will be good, a "great reward."

What Someone Else Has Said:

Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner (*Super Freakonomics*, William Morrow) quote John Tukey: "An approximate answer to the right question is worth a great deal more than a precise answer to the wrong question."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Teach me, Lord..."

October 17, 2010

Text: Psalm 46
"God Provides Refuge"

Martin Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress" is based on Psalm 46. Luther wrote the hymn in German (in order to get church music in the language of the people) and numerous persons have translated it into English.

We are familiar with Frederick Hedge's version (Hedge was a Unitarian pastor in nineteenth century New England): "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing."

In the sixteenth century, Miles Coverdale did the first English translation: "Oure God is a defence and towre, A good armour and good weapon."

In the current hymnal of the British Methodist Church, Thomas Carlyle's translation is used: "A safe

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October adult Bible study *continued from page 14*

stronghold our God is still, A trusty shield and weapon."

Fortress. Bulwark. Defense. Tower. Stronghold. Shield. Weapon. All of these are efforts to flesh out what the psalmist means when writing "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

James Strong points out that the Hebrew word translated "refuge" is based on a word that means "to flee." In other words, God's shelter is a place of hope when life brings despair; God's shelter is a place of safety when life is on the attack; God's shelter is a place where one might flee, not so much as a permanent locale as a place for retreat in order to re-group and re-deploy.

But Psalm 46 is not just about God as a hiding place.

God is also a strength, a positive action. God's presence is more than a shelter, a refuge; God's presence is also a power. Carl Schultz writes, "Not only is strength a quality given by God, he himself is that strength."

Hebrew poetry often is expressed in saying the same thing in two ways [First time—"He makes wars cease to the end of the earth"; second time—"he breaks the bow and shatters the spear" (46:9)] In Psalm 46:1, the God who is our refuge is the God who is our strength—two poetic ways of speaking of one God.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In writing about the hymn "A Mighty Fortress", Marilyn Stulken (*Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*, Fortress) has penned: "If the hymn appeared in a 1528 hymnal, perhaps it was written in response to persecutions which occurred in 1527, during which Luther's friend, Leonhard Kaiser, was burned at the stake...Luther sang it daily at Coburg...Melancthon, Jonas, and Cruciger during their banishment in 1547, were comforted by hearing a young girl sing it at Weimar."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of the psalmist, God of the Reformation, God of this day..."

October 24, 2010

Text: Psalm 47
"God Is in Charge"

Okay. I am biased. I love the hymns of the Church, so what first jumped out at me in reading Psalm

47 is that more than half a dozen times the psalmist calls on us to sing or make music (verses 1, 5, 6, 7).

The celebration is the recognition that God is not only the God of Israel (47:4), but is also the God of all nations (47:8).

That calls for singing!

This is the kind of singing that the Israelites did when a king was installed.

Take a look at 2 Kings 11:12: "Then he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the covenant; they proclaimed him king, and anointed him; they clapped their hands and shouted, 'Long live the king!'"

Psalm 47 expands the notion of king to include God's sovereign reign over all the earth (47:2, 7, 8, 9).

Lots of nations claimed to have a god who sustained their own life, but this revelation is that the God of Israel is indeed the God of all people. That kicks it up a notch, doesn't it!

These days it is hard not to eavesdrop on cell phone conversations, particularly when one end of the conversation is carried out at full volume as the caller strolls down the aisle of the grocery store.

I heard this the other day: "Well, all I have to say is that he wouldn't treat me that way. He may be in charge of you but he is not in charge of me!" Then, she added, "Will Cheerios be all right?"

Quite apart from the choice of cereal, I was curious to know just what would make someone feel that someone else was in charge.

Does the "in charge" person make all the decisions? Does the "in charge" person force others to obey? Does the "in charge" person make everything turn out right (or, perhaps, wrong)?

What does it mean to be in charge? We need to reflect there because the claim of Psalm 47 is that God is in charge.

Commenting on this text in *The Cambridge Bible Commentary*, J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay wrote, "Though God's total rule is not yet consummate, it is already assured and is therefore a present reality to faith."

This sounds like a crowd that begins its full-throated cheer when victory is anticipated, even though the game is not over.

We do not know exactly how God will exercise God's authority, but we do know who wins the game.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Why Catholics Can't Sing* (Crossroad), Thomas Day has written, "...Enthusiasm has always been an

essential ingredient of Christianity and Christian worship. To be a Christian one must be, in some way or other, 'enthusiastic,' and worship without 'enthusiasm' is not Christian. I hasten to add that this enthusiasm can take many different forms, including some that look perfectly calm."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Praise in our singing! Praise in our speaking! Praise in our living!..."

October 31, 2010

Text: Psalm 63
"God's Presence Comforts and Assures"

Halloween. All Saints. Reformation Sunday. The calendar begins to touch several bases as we close out the month of October!

One thing that Psalm 63 makes clear is that all of the life of faith is not lived on a cushion. "My soul thirsts (63:1)...my flesh faints (63:1)...dry and weary land (63:1)." These are not exactly descriptions of the life promised in "prosperity gospel."

The question for the psalmist is not "Can life get tough?" The question for the psalmist is "Who is with me when life (without fail) gets tough?"

Note the heading over this psalm (in the *New Revised Standard Version*): "A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah."

How do we live in the wilderness?

Christians, of course, think immediately of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).

What made that time in the wilderness so challenging is that the offers made by the devil are good and desirable things: make bread to feed the hungry (Matthew 4:3), give a dramatic evidence of God's power (Matthew 4:6), and have authority over the entire world (Matthew 4:9). In a sense, the most difficult wildernesses in which we live are not always those filled with obvious pain, but those in which the decision for the good is not so clear.

Note the context in which the psalmist begins to find the reality of God's presence when life takes him into the wilderness: "so I have looked upon you in the sanctuary" (Psalm 67:2).

It is in the context of coming apart to worship—the sanctuary—that the psalmist began to glimpse the

"power and glory" of God. (The sanctuary probably refers to the temple in Jerusalem.)

Because the writer of the psalm has been part of the community of worship, he is able to praise in the midst of wilderness days (63:3); he is able to sing in the midst of suffering (63:8).

Although the psalmist would not have known of the Eucharist, Christians resonate with the image of "a rich feast" (63:5), where the nearness of God provides nourishment for the journey.

Coming to the Table ("a constant Communion," John Wesley said) gives us the experience of looking at the goodness of the Lord, and, as the psalmist says in verse 7, it is in that looking that there is found comfort and assurance for life in the wilderness.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Susanne Johnson (*Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom* (Abingdon) wrote: "Christian spiritual formation is a matter of becoming the song that we sing, the Story we tell."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Dwell with me in my wilderness..."

MARRIAGE

Congratulations to Tuck Taylor (Burlington: Amity) and George Loveland who were married July 16.

BIRTH

Congratulations to Matt (Raleigh: Edenton St. assoc.) and Elena Ashburn on the birth of Lucier "Lucy" Elizabeth Ashburn on July 9.

DEATH

LANCASTER, Louise Brown Lancaster, widow of James Robert Lancaster, died July 9. The funeral was held July 12, at Wesley Heights UMC in Fayetteville.

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar
ANNOUNCEMENTS
 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

DISCIPLE trainings - Sept. 18, 25

The Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, in partnership with The Duke Endowment, will offer two free trainings for NC Conference leaders of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP. Trainings this fall include: Sept. 18 - First UMC, Cary and Sept. 25 - Haymount UMC, Fayetteville. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call 336-454-5348.

Edelman, Carder at Junaluska Peace Conference on Sept. 18-21

The third annual Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Sept. 18-21, will explore social issues facing children. Participants in the conference, "Peace for the World's Children," will have the opportunity to join children's advocates from across the United States for a variety of workshops and presentations. Conference leaders include Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, Dr. Jeni Stepanek and Bishop Kenneth Carder. For more information, see <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace/>.

UMM "Share the Game, Share your Faith" - Sept. 25

"Share the Game, Share your Faith," is a community outreach event sponsored by the NC Conference United Methodist Men during the Duke vs. Army football game in Durham on Sept. 25. Local UMM units are encouraged to reach out to local youth groups to sponsor their participation in the event. The cost is \$20 per person and includes the pre-game event, lunch, and game ticket. Chad Goss, a former Alabama starting wide receiver, is the pre-game event speaker. He will share his personal story of overcoming many obstacles as a child and teenager before his life-changing journey at the University of Alabama. The exact time of his talk and lunch will depend on when the game starts. That will not be known until 13 days before Sept. 25. For more information and registration, contact Ricky Hines, rgmhines@bellsouth.net or call (919) 772-2383 or 614-204-9799. For sponsorship information, contact William Green at (919) 476-1861 or wgreen@fumc-cary.org.

Order of Deacons gathering-Sept 30

A Gathering of the Order of Deacons will be held on Thursday, Sept. 30 at St. Francis UMC in Cary. The day will begin with a gathering at 9:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided with a suggested donation of \$5 per person. The day will conclude by 3 p.m.

Historical Society Workshop - Oct. 2

The NC Conference Archives and History Commission and Historical Society are sponsoring a workshop that will provide teaching and learning for gathering oral histories and employing media to preserve local church history on Oct. 2 at First UMC, Wilson, from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Excellent leadership will help participants use formats and technologies to collect and store sacred memories. A box lunch is the only cost (free will offering) for this professional training experience. Please register with Robin Harry at rharry@nccumc.org. Church historians and their guests (including media-savvy youth) are encouraged to attend.

Change in make-up date for Sexual Ethics training - Oct. 30

Please note the change of date for the Sexual Ethics Training make-up day from Thursday, Nov. 4 to Saturday, Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the new Methodist Building. This change was made in the hopes that a Saturday event will make it as convenient as possible for all pastors to attend this training. Persons planning on attending the make-up session must contact Linda Bourey at lbourey@nccumc.org so an appropriate lunch plans are arranged. For the other event dates, go to <http://nccumc.org/ministerial-relations>.

Lighten the Burden AIDS Conference in Dallas, TX - Oct. 14-16

Lighten the Burden III, the third international AIDS conference sponsored by the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund committee, will be Oct. 14-16 at the Radisson Central Hotel in Dallas, TX. The registration fee of \$100 includes meals and resources. Registration deadline is Sept. 20.

The conference will feature national and international speakers, including Dr. Musa W. Dube, theologian and biblical scholar, the University of Botswana; Dr. Pauline Muchina, senior partnership adviser, UNAIDS; Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, episcopal leader of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference; Jeffrey Crowley, director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, and Rev. Tyrone Gordon, St. Luke UMC, Dallas.

Conference workshop sessions include discussions of: "Looking at AIDS through Cultural Context," "AIDS & Communities of Color - How can the church respond?" and "Resourcing Local Churches & Annual Conference AIDS Ministries."

To register, go to www.umglobalaidsfund.org by Sept. 20. Contact Donna Brandyberry, General Board of Church & Society, dbrandyberry@umc-gbcs.org or (202) 488-5641 with questions.

Project AGAPE director visits NC Conference - Oct. 20 to Nov. 8

Project AGAPE Director and NC-sponsored missionary, Nara Melkonyan, will be itinerating through the NC Conference from Oct. 20 - Nov. 8. The project's focus is relief efforts in Armenia such as food, medical supplies, and medication. Project AGAPE also works with the Armenian Church to provide a holistic ministry in pastoral care, education, healthcare, agriculture and economic development.

Melkonyan is available to speak at worship services, UMW groups, UMM gathers, Sunday school classes, Wednesday night fellowship gatherings, mission and ministry team gatherings, and other venues.

Consider inviting Nara to come and share the ministry of Project AGAPE, a ministry serving refugee families and other vulnerable people in Armenia. For scheduling, please contact Rev. Bill Haddock at revbillh@nccumc.org, or (919) 772-2042. A love offering is requested to cover her in-conference travel expenses.

Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land - January 2011

Travel with Bishop Gwinn on a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 2011. Depart on Jan. 24 and visit all the holy sites, worship together, experience the teachings of Bishop Gwinn, and walk where Jesus walked. Contact Harold Salmon, Conference Director of Tour Ministries at 919-377-2950.

Phyllis Tickle at Winter Soulstice - February 2011

The North Carolina Academy for Spiritual Formation has announced that nationally-recognized author and speaker Phyllis Tickle will be featured at Winter Soulstice, a Friday night-Saturday retreat to be held at Saint Francis United Methodist Church in Cary, Feb. 4-5, 2011.

Tickle will be presenting from her new book, "The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why." In her discussion, Tickle will explain signs indicating that Christendom is once again going through a reformation and will give hints about what can be expected. More details will be announced later. The Academy for Spiritual Formation is sponsored by The Upper Room, Nashville, TN and jointly sponsors the North Carolina 5-day Academy with the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Opportunities for Learning

"Planning Worship that Works" seminar - Sept. 16

Worship planning is a team sport. Like any team sport, it requires good communication between the players and a solid game-plan.

When clergy and laity have a game-plan or system, the collaboration is synergistic and the church can literally and figuratively sing. The challenge many churches face is how to develop a strong working relationship and put in place a system that makes the job a joy, rather than a "worship war."

"Planning Worship that Works," a National Leader Series workshop will be presented by the Academy for Leadership Excellence for pastors or lay leaders searching for a way to develop worship that fulfills the mission of the church and ignites the passion of congregations. The Sept. 16 workshop offers practical tips to develop a worship planning process that engages all the players in offering passionate, exciting and invitational worship.

Pastor Jim Harnish of Hyde Park UMC in Florida will lead the session. Rev. Harnish is the author of numerous books, Bible studies and articles and also presents workshops throughout the country.

Hosted at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh on Thursday, Sept. 16, this session will last from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The cost is \$75 which includes a continental breakfast and lunch.

Attendees may receive 0.5 CEUs for an additional \$15 fee. Churches that have more than three persons attending will receive a \$10 discount per person. For the most impact on the worship planning process, clergy and laity should attend together.

For more information or to register, please call (919) 208-2169 or e-mail lwiebesmith@nccumc.org. The Academy is developing a new web presence at www.theafle.org

Workshop on best employment practices for churches - Sept. 30

The Rev. Joy T. Melton, author of "Safe Sanctuaries for Ministers" will present a day-long presentation on a variety of employment practice issues and topics important for every church to understand. This opportunity will take place on Sept. 30 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Pfeiffer University's Charlotte campus. The cost is \$30 per person which includes lunch and registration deadline is Sept. 27. Learn key statutory provisions applicable to churches, topics to include in a church employee/staff handbook, best practices for hiring and supervising staff members, and best practices for handling employee complaints. By the conclusion of the day, participants will have received tools that are current, cost effective, and simple to implement.

Rev. Melton is the chief resource officer of the UM Property and Casualty Trust, the non-profit property insurance company for United Methodist ministries. She consults with local churches, districts, and annual conferences, on a wide variety of employment issues and provides training for church leaders on these issues as well as on insurance issues, Safe Sanctuaries, and the complaint procedures found in the *Book of Discipline*. To obtain a registration form and more information, go to the Western NC Conference website at <http://www.wnccumc.org/ced/pfeiffer.htm>

Immigrants' Reality and the Mission of the Church - Sept. 29-Oct. 2

The "Immigrants' Reality and the Mission of the Church" event will be held Sept. 29 - Oct. 2 at Camp Chestnut Ridge in Efland. The event teaches a participatory methodology in a workshop frame that is provided by the National Plan for Hispanic Ministries. Basic information will be offered as well as a time to build relationships, network, and reflect and strategize in order to take action in areas of ministry. This event, while bilingual, is directed toward English speakers and Hispanic/Latino leaders doing ministry in the NC Conference and the Western NC Conference. Team Facilitation is provided from the National Plan of Hispanic/Latino Ministries, UMC. The event is organized by the Committee on Refugees and Immigration and the Committee of Hispanic Latino Ministries of the NC Conference and by the General Board of Church and Society. Visit the site below for information and a registration form: http://nccumc.org/files/Immigrants_Reality.pdf.

"Mainline or Methodist?" church's evangelistic mission - Oct. 14-16

Do you know conference or church leaders who are struggling with what it means to be Christian and Methodist in the 21st Century? If so, the General Board of Discipleship recommends the Wesleyan Leadership Conference to be held Oct. 14-16 at West End UMC in Nashville, TN. The conference will look at not only the vision, message, and method that helped John Wesley lead a revival among the people called Methodists but also how the same vision, message, and method can bring revival in the church today.

In his book "Mainline or Methodist?: Rediscovering Our Evangelistic Mission," Dr. Scott Kisker argues that the heart of Methodism is about holiness: "the restoration of what we were created to be—the restoration of the image of God. When we became 'mainline,' we stopped actually being Methodist in all but name." The three-day event will include presentations, worship, small group discussions, Holy Communion, and prayer. Kisker will present ideas and recommendations from his book. Other presenters will include Taylor Burton-Edwards, Director of Worship Resources, who will discuss what a 21st Century Methodist revival could look and act like. Steve Manskar and Sandy Jackson will lead the conference in a workshop on Covenant Discipleship groups; small groups, based on the early class meeting, the method of Methodism.

For more information or to register, visit the GBOD web page at <http://is.gd/dRndD>. CEU's are available for conference attendees.

Deepening Effectiveness in Discipleship - Oct. 29 or 30

The Office of Connectional Ministries announces a workshop on discipleship for pastors and members of congregations of the NC Conference. "Deepening Your Effectiveness in Discipleship" is presented by Dan Glover and Claudia Lavy and addresses the challenge from Bishop Al Gwinn during his State of the Church message at Annual Conference.

Bishop Gwinn challenged the church to understand that the basic practices of following Jesus—Bible study, prayer and acts of mercy are not optional. He also said the focus for too long has been on increasing membership in the church, rather than on discipleship itself. Nowhere in the Bible does it say the church needs more members for finances and activities, he said. Instead, it's about discipleship.

Glover and Lavy have been featured workshop leaders at the School of Congregational Development for three years, as well as presenters at conference and local church workshops all across the denomination. They co-authored the book, "Deepening Your Effectiveness: Restructuring the Local Church for Life Transformation," (Discipleship Resources, 2006).

Participants will find the workshop an interactive experience. They will come to recognize the benefits of a plan of discipleship for the local church and steps for developing a plan for forming disciples of Jesus Christ.

The workshop will be held at the United Methodist Building in Garner. On two days, Oct. 29 and 30, identical presentations will be made by Glover and Lavy, allowing participants to choose to attend on a Friday or a Saturday.

It is expected that pastors and lay members of local congregations will attend. While it is not necessary that they attend on the same day, every participating church should have lay members registered, as well as the pastor.

On both Friday, Oct. 29 and Saturday, Oct. 30, the workshop begins at 9 a.m. and continues until 4:30 p.m. The \$10 cost for the workshop covers the cost of the lunch that is to be provided.

Rethinking Worship & Song Event - March 1-3, 2011

A national event to introduce Worship & Song, a new collection of song and worship resources developed by The General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House has been announced for March 1-3, 2011 in Nashville, TN.

The Worship & Song print and digital resources are scheduled for release in February 2011. The event will include worship, singing, and learning, and features workshops with Carlton Young, Marcia McFee, Mark Miller, and many others. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/bsb5FD>.

Youth Pilgrimage - Nov. 12-14

Pilgrimage is a time and place to for youth to discover that faith and discipleship can be fun! Pilgrimage is intended to invite youth into a new or deeper commitment to Jesus Christ and life of faithful Christian discipleship.

The speaker will be the Rev. Bart Campolo, and the theme is "With One Voice" —Jesus calls each person to go into the world and spread the Gospel. Participants will come together to speak one language from a heart of worship, with one voice. Many youth and youth groups from across the Conference will be involved in the leadership of worship at Pilgrimage as part of an auditioned house band, offering testimonies, acts of worship, and video offerings.

Cost: \$20 per person (excludes meals and lodging). Registration deadline is Oct. 25. More information is online at <http://nccumc.org/youth/events/pilgrimage/>. The event is held at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville.

conference CALENDAR

September

- 6 Labor Day (UMB Closed)
- 7 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 11 Conference Council on Youth Ministries and Pilgrimage Planning Team Meeting 10:00am
- 12 Legacy Sunday
- 13 Equitable Compensation
- 14 Gathering of the Order of Elders 9:30am , Nashville UMC
- 16 "Planning Worship that Works" Edenton St. UMC, sponsored by Academy for Leadership Excellence
- 17-19 UMW Mother-Child Retreat, Camp Don Lee
- 18 DISCIPLE Bible Study & Rings of Fellowship training , First UMC: Cary
- 18-21 Peace Conference at Lake Junaluska
- 21 Insurance Committee, 10am, UM Building
- 25 DISCIPLE Bible Study & Rings of Fellowship training, Haymount UMC, Fayetteville
- 27 Sexual Ethics Training, 9:30 a.m., St; Luke: Sanford for BU, DU, and SA districts, call Peggy Hendley, 919-775-7041 to register
- 29 Older Adult Ministries, 10am- noon , UM Building
- 30 A Gathering of the Order of Deacons, 9:30am, Location TBA

October

- 1-3 Weekend Mission Camp for Youth, St Paul UMC: Rocky Mount
- 2 Workshop on Oral History and Digital History, Wilson
- 3 World Communion Sunday
- 4 Quadrennial Sexual Ethics Training, 9:30 a.m., Centenary: Smithfield for RA, RM, and GO districts; call Gina Harr 919-734-5324 to register
- 8 Clergy Financial and Retirement Planning Seminar, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- 10 Children's Sabbath|
- 11-12 Duke Convocation & Pastors' School, Duke Divinity School
- 12 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 14-16 Wesleyan Leadership Conference, West End UMC, Nashville, TN
- 16 Conference UMW Annual Meeting, Methodist University, Fayetteville
- 17 Laity Sunday
- 18 Conference Connectional Table Meeting,
- 21 Sexual Ethics Training, 9:30 a.m., First: Laurinburg for FA, RO, WI districts; call Sarah Cameron, 910-276-6641 to register
- 25 Sexual Ethics Training 9:30 a.m., St. James: Greenville for EC, GR, and NB districts, call Barbara Matthews, 252-756-3918 to register
- 30 Sexual Ethics Training Make-up day, 10 a.m. UM Building, Garner, NC; call Linda Bourey at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 244 to register

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

African-American Clergy Health Summit provides education on self-care and ministry renewal

Be renewed in your ministry by attending the African-American Clergy Health Summit at Lake Junaluska, Sept. 27- 28. Participants will participate in a self-care covenant workshop designed specifically for African-American clergy, which reflects the health summit's theme, "Wanting to Heal and Be Healed," John 5: 1-9.

The Self-Care Covenant workshop is an interactive session where attendees can evaluate personal dimensions of health and well-being related to their daily life and work. Each workshop is planned and led by trainers within the annual conferences, and will provide a structured opportunity for individuals to examine their current choices within the areas of mental and emotional health, physical health, social health, and spiritual health.

"The continual giving expected of pastors takes its toll over time," said Dr. Carl Arrington, Director of African-American Ministries at Lake Junaluska. "As ministers, we want to reach out and heal others, but we must also take care of ourselves in order to be healers of others. Participants in the self-care workshop will develop a self-care covenant, create a plan for positive changes, and establish an accountability plan. We hope many will participate."

The health summit and self-care covenant workshops will be led by The Rev. Dr. Embra Jackson, Assistant to the Bishop of the Mississippi Annual Conference, and Edmond Pienkosz, Health and Wellness Manager of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church.

For details about this event and to register, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/health-summit or call 828-454-6656. The health summit is sponsored by the Office of African-American Ministries at Lake Junaluska and the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church.

Lake Junaluska Multicultural Conference embraces diversity

The United Methodist Church strives to be a racially-inclusive Church for all of God's children as expressed in Scripture. All are invited to Lake Junaluska's 2nd Multicultural Conference, Dec. 2-4. The theme for the 2010 Lake Junaluska Multicultural Conference is "Embracing Christ's Multi-Ethnic Body: Breaking Down Barriers and Building Bridges."

During this event, persons will experience life-changing times of listening and learning as participants share stories of challenges, disappointments, hopes and triumphs along the pilgrimage to make churches the inclusive communities of love and respect God has called us to create.

Leaders with a passion for justice, mercy, inclusiveness and a commitment to welcoming all to the table of the Lord include: the Rev. Eric Law of Kaleidoscope Institute (via Skype); Bishop Gregory Palmer of the Illinois Area; Bishop Will Willimon of the North Alabama Conference; Kristina Gonzales, Associate Director of Connectional Ministries for the Pacific Northwest Conference; Dr. Anne Marshall, a community activist who speaks on Indigenous issues, racism, and human rights violations around the world; Dr. Tim Tyson, award-winning author of "Blood Done Sign My Name" and Senior Scholar at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University; Dr. Mary John Dye, who began her ministry as the first cross-racial appointment in the Mississippi Conference; and Bishop William Morris (retired), who provides leadership for the Design Team of the Multicultural Conference.

"The Lake Junaluska Multicultural Conference will be a place for embracing diversity," said the Rev. Jimmy L. Carr, executive director of Lake Junaluska. "Persons will come together in a safe, life-affirming and life-transforming environment to explore the common bond of God's love for all."

"As we plan this conference, we realize that all persons are at different places on the journey to achieve inclusiveness in their lives and churches, and all may not realize the seriousness of the threat of racial division to our church and society at large," said Dr. Carl Arrington, director of African-American Ministries at Lake Junaluska. "Persons from all walks of life are invited to join us for this inspiring event as we break down barriers and build bridges that can strengthen and unite families, attract young adults, value and embrace all of God's children, reconcile adults, and celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of us all."

Early registration ends Oct. 16. One CEU credit is available. Call 828-454-6656 or visit www.lakejunaluska.com/multicultural to register or for more information.

Around the CONFERENCE



Sharon UMC, Poplar Branch burns mortgage on "Each One, Reach One Building"

(L-R) Jo Stepp, Sunday school superintendent; Claude Rollins, trustee chair; Clyde Spruill, trustee; James Guard, council chair; the Rev. C. René Edwards, pastor; Susie Spruill, finance committee participate in burning the mortgage for Sharon UMC's "Each One, Reach One Building."

"The Each One, Reach One Building" is dedicated to the glory of God as a Community Learning and Youth Center. One end of the building houses a 12 computer lab that serves members of the church and community. The church partners with The College of the Albemarle to provide a GED program for the community. The other end of the building serves as a youth center, for Bible study classes, a Parents' Night Out program, piano lessons, and other activities for the church and the community.

The Rural Church Division of The Duke Endowment Fund partnered with Sharon UMC to provide equipment and furniture for the facility. The church is located in Poplar Branch in the Elizabeth City district.

Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

Experienced Writers Needed

At times, assignment writers are needed for the NCCC Advocate. Must be experienced with journalistic writing and AP Stylebook. Anyone interested should send samples of writing to Bill Norton, Advocate editor, bnorton@nccumc.org.

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New Hope UMC, Hertford travels to Egypt

This year, the Vacation Bible School theme at New Hope UMC, in Hertford, was Egypt, "Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace." Fifty-four children attended the event, and there were approximately 30 youth and adult helpers.

Each day, participants traveled back almost 4,000 years to ancient Egypt to become part of history as they saw, heard, touched, and even tasted what it was like to live in Pharaoh's empire.

They explored authentic Egyptian Marketplace shops; visited Joseph in Pharaoh's prison; took part in games; danced to lively Bible songs; collected Bible Memory Makers to remind them of God's Word; looked for evidence of God all around them through God Sightings; and sampled tasty tidbits as they discovered more about how God was always with Joseph in good times and bad.

Each day concluded at Celebration, which was a time of upbeat worship where everyone was involved. These experiences made God's Word come alive with new meaning for all who participated.

After a meal together, groups gathered in their different "Egyptian Families." There were six Families this year: Asyut, Giza, Memphis, Per-Bastet, Rosetta, and Zoan.

Once Family Time was over, the children visited "Egypt", where they went to the Pyramid Playground, visited Joseph to hear about his journey from prison to palace, and explored the Marketplace Shops where they made crafts and participated in fun activities like petting real animals in the Animal Courtyard.

Missions was emphasized during this year's VBS. The children brought in canned goods each day for the New Hope UMC Food Pantry. The children brought in 221 canned and boxed items and collected \$258.

— Patricia Walker Murphy, writing staff of NH UMC

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Annual Conference Session for youth is evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, worship

By Amber June Suits *

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus says "Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This is called the Great Commission. Of this, "Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations" calls each of us to reach out and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Annual Conference Session for youth (ACS) is evangelism. On July 19-25, not only were there so many new faces at this conference event, but some youth came to know Christ for the very first time. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" calls each of us to welcome new believers and encourage one another in our spiritual journeys.

ACS is fellowship. Through the daily worship services, growth groups, and interest groups that week, the youth and staff were able to connect to each other and guide each other in a closer walk with God. "And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" is where Jesus tells us to be a follower and to intentionally live our lives to be like Him.

ACS is discipleship. Growth groups and interest groups allowed the youth and staff to help build and strengthen their relationship with God and their quest to be like Christ. They were designed specifically to help challenge each of us to grow spiritually in our walks with him on our own. In Mark 12:30, Jesus gives to us the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

ACS is worship. The powerful vespers and worship services during the week were held with amazing songs, prayers, scripture, and communion that allowed us to reach the calling of worship- honoring and praising our Father. ACS answers the calling of each of these areas of ministry by each purpose-filled activity.

In relation to the overall theme of ACS, "Risky Business," these two scriptures are essentially God calling every one of us to be "risky" in our thoughts, behavior, surroundings/friends, and in our faith, to live for him. Christ gave his life for us. Shouldn't we adhere to these scriptures and risk it all for him?

Annual Conference Session is designed for growing in Christ with other Christians and giving youth the tools needed to have a long-lasting relationship with Christ. With that, tools and ideas are given to the youth that they need to take back to their local church.

As an important event during ACS, legislative affairs allowed us to make our faith practical by putting it into a real life situation and giving us the chance to voice our opinions as the body of Christ. Elections were also held to pick officers for the upcoming year. As the new secretary, I feel so blessed to have the opportunity to serve God and represent the youth of our conference.



Annual Conference Session for youth brings together youth from all 12 districts to participate in legislative affairs sessions to debate and vote on resolutions addressing current issues, gather in small groups for spiritual growth activities, elect officers and select district representatives to conference committees.

Along with the youth and adult leaders, I want to thank the officers this past year, Hannah McMillan-president, Jillian Hines-vice president, Will Farnell-treasurer, Tory Soukup-legislative affairs person, and Jolean Brann-secretary, who have done an incredible job putting their time and heart into all they've done in the past year for the conference.

I'd also like to welcome the newly-elected officers: Sydney Evans as our new president, Bradley

Wallace-vice president, Taylor Higgins- treasurer, and Ali Santiago- legislative affairs person.

As the conference secretary, I'd like to thank the past officers and welcome the new officers, CYC, and CCYM in hopes of an amazing year ahead of us for the conference youth ministries! I know that God has great plans in store for all of us.

* Amber June Suits is serving as secretary of the Conference Youth Committee for 2010-11.



ABOVE: The new Conference Youth Committee members were named at ACS. Conference Youth Officers for 2010-11 were commissioned as part of the conclusion of ACS. Committee members gathered Aug. 12-14 at Camp Chestnut Ridge for worship and planning for the 2010-11 Conference Youth year.

President	Sydney Evans	Abundant Life	Durham District
Vice-President	Bradley Wallace	Salem	Fayetteville District
Secretary	Amber June Suits	Greater Heights	Goldsboro District
Treasurer	Taylor Higgins	Greater Heights	Goldsboro District
Legislative Affairs			
Person (LAP)	Ali Santiago	Pine Valley - Jacksonville	New Bern District

Other members of the Conference Youth Committee were also selected:

Peter Norwood	Swepsonville	Burlington District
Donovan Patrick	Edenton	Elizabeth City District
Gray Peedin	1st Washington	Greenville District
Courtney Jennings	Knightdale	Raleigh District
Richard Macy	Caledonia	Rockingham District
Drew Glenn	1st Rocky Mnt	Rocky Mount District
Will Manness	St Luke	Sanford District
Sara White	Wesley Heights	Fayetteville District
Josh Leslie	Horne Memorial	Raleigh District
Landis Barber	Brown's Chapel	Sanford District
Lindsey Todd	Sharon	Wilmington District
Keon Simmons		Rocky Mount District



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 10-Fold mission focus online event 2
- Deepening effectiveness in discipleship workshops. . . . 3
- New Rethink Church resources for seekers. 9
- November Bible Study 12
- UMM and DBOM partner to expand prison ministry . . 16

Spirited *Life*

Addressing the health of UMC clergy in N.C.

By Kate Rugani *

If you're concerned about clergy health, you're not alone. The topic has been in the news often over the past few months, in part because Duke Divinity School's Clergy Health Initiative has confirmed that United Methodist pastors in North Carolina are more likely to suffer from obesity and chronic disease than other comparable state residents.

Now there's a way to help pastors become healthier.

The Clergy Health Initiative has developed Spirited Life, a multi-year holistic health and wellness program and behavioral health study. Enrollment is open through Oct. 31 for all clergy serving under appointment to a local church or on conference staff in the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences of The United Methodist Church, with the exception of clergy who received the services of the Clergy Health Initiative pilot program.

The program is funded by The Duke Endowment and endorsed by the two participating conferences. There is no cost to participate.

Spirited Life recasts health in the context of ministry, recognizing that unless pastors are well in mind, body, and spirit, it is difficult for them to care effectively for their congregations.

Working within a holistic framework of Wesleyan theology and spirituality, Spirited Life focuses on two distinct but inseparable drivers of health—the ability to deal with stressful situations and the ability to eat well and take care of the body—while also folding in accountability and support measures.

"We learned through our pilot program that building in support mechanisms was crucial—pastors really seemed to value the opportunity to share their successes and challenges with others," said Robin Swift, the Clergy Health Initiative's director of health programs.

"Spirited Life participants will receive support from specially trained health coaches, as well as from their peers. The program will also engage congregations and conference leadership in support of pastors' health, because change happens only if a problem is addressed on many fronts," Swift said.

Because the program is a research study as well as a service program, pastors wanting to participate must



The Rev. Jim Harry, senior pastor at St. Paul UMC in Goldsboro, participated in the Clergy Health Initiative pilot program, the forerunner of Spirited Life. Enrollment in Spirited Life ends Oct. 31.

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"10-Fold" online event to highlight UM ministry in areas of poverty, disease, and social injustice

The United Methodist Church plans a 10-day series of live Internet events from Sunday, Oct. 10 through Tuesday, Oct. 19, to report on the denomination's work to combat poverty, disease, and social injustice throughout the world. Known as 10-Fold, the events will provide immediate access to missionaries, volunteers, and churches in Haiti, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States.

Webcasts, streaming video, online chats, and discussions have been developed by the General Board of Global Ministries, the mission agency of The United Methodist Church, with the goal of drawing 100,000 supporters for the church's global program.

"Millions of church members across the world share a passion for the ministries of The United Methodist Church," said Thomas Kemper, chief executive of Global Ministries. "These ministries rebuild hospitals, provide clean water, build churches, protect victims of violence, and strive to create a just world. 10-Fold is a chance to see this work firsthand and be part of a movement that multiplies God's work."

Event support has been pledged by sponsors throughout the U.S. including several Annual Conferences as well as individual churches. Among the sponsors are the Western NC Conference, Edenton St. UMC in Raleigh, and Horne Memorial UMC in Clayton.

The Rev. Shawn Bakker, who is in charge of development for the agency, explained the process: "Visitors to 10-Fold.org may register their particular interest in a program, triggering \$1 of support on their behalf [by the day's sponsor] each time they do so. This has the potential to generate \$100,000 for the work supported by The Advance, the designated mission giving arm of the UMC. And 100 percent of every \$1 donation made possible by 10 sponsors will go directly to the chosen project. It is a way to learn more about what The United Methodist Church is doing globally and be part of a world-wide conversation and share your faith."

To encourage participation by church members, Bible study groups, and congregations, a complete schedule and toolkit are available at www.10-fold.org. Resource packets may be downloaded for adults and for children. Visitors may also view a 10-Fold video on YouTube, connect with 10-Fold on Facebook, and follow 10-Fold on Twitter.

For a detailed schedule of online events from Oct 10 through 19, and additional background information, please visit www.10-fold.org.



10 projects. 10 days. 10-Fold unfolded

Daily schedule for ministry features at 10-Fold.org:

- **October 10: Haiti Recovery** – 3,000 humanitarians helping a country rebuild itself. Sponsor: Greater New Jersey Conference
- **October 11: Children's Health and Wholeness** – Transforming communities so that children can live healthy and whole lives. Sponsor: Members of The Advance Committee
- **October 12: Missionaries in the US** – Dedicated men and women living their faith through remarkable service. Sponsor: Broadway UMC, Ames, Iowa
- **October 13: Missionaries Around the World** – Growing a global force for faith and hope in over 60 countries. Sponsor: California-Pacific Annual Conference
- **October 14: Training Church Leaders** – Training the thousands called to devote their lives to Christ and the Church. Sponsor: Western North Carolina Conference
- **October 15: Church Planting Worldwide** – From Asia to Latin America, introducing the United Methodists and sharing the gospel through word and deed. Sponsor: McEachern Memorial UMC, Powder Springs, Georgia
- **October 16: Justice for Our Neighbors** – Church-based teams helping refugee-seekers and immigrants navigate their way as they start their lives in the United States. Sponsor: Women's Division and Broadway UMC, Ames, Iowa
- **October 17: Clean Water and Sanitation** – Helping families in Africa and South America gain access to safe water and sanitation facilities. Sponsor: Union UMC, Conway, South Carolina
- **October 18: Healthcare in Africa** – Combating disease in 22 hospitals and clinics across Africa. Sponsor: Hyde Park UMC, Tampa, Florida
- **October 19: Sustainable Agriculture** – Training farmers so rural families and communities can thrive. Sponsors: Edenton Street UMC, Raleigh, and Horne Memorial UMC, Clayton

Ways to participate

- Go to 10-Fold.org daily and register interest in a project with one easy click. Participants will trigger a \$1.00 donation. Up to \$10,000 will be donated per project.
- Each day will feature a different project supported through The Advance, the designated giving arm of The United Methodist Church. Daily activities include live online events, in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Times still to be determined. There will be downloadable podcasts, fact sheets, and videos for each project.
- Children's resource packets will be available for the projects, so all ages can participate.
- Participation can be at home or in an office, with family and friends, or with a group. Church groups of all ages can come together and use the 10-Fold activities to start a conversation. And when online at 10-Fold.org, take a few minutes to register interest in the featured project and spend time learning about the important work that is being done around the world. Spread the word.

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Participating in a teaching session at the General Board of Church and Society, prior to visiting legislators (L-R) are Julie Lee, Tommy Lee, Trainer Susan Burton, Julia Wax.

Swansboro studies hunger issues at Washington seminar

By Jim Brewster *

"We were really impressed at the expertise and help we received," a Swansboro UMC member said about the staff of the UMC General Board of Church and Society in Washington, DC, after a five day summer seminar attended by 14 members of the Swansboro UMC (New Bern District).

These seminars are a unique program of the GBCS and seen as a way to develop a faith-filled understanding of difficult social issues.

The seminar theme, "Hungry for Justice," originated in Swansboro; the program at the Methodist Building on Capitol Hill was arranged especially for the church by Susan Burton, director of the UM Seminar program, assisted by Kori Robins, summer intern and student at Duke Seminary.

"Bread for the World" stressed national and international food and staff from the General Board advised the group on advocating for justice and public policy. They visited the offices of Senators Kay Hagan and Richard Burr and Representative Walter B. Jones where they urged legislators to pass bills funding and providing access for children's nutrition programs and supporting local farmers and commercial fishermen.

The group visited National Cathedral, the Holocaust Museum, the Youth Garden at the National Arboretum, Vietnam Memorial and worshiped at historic Foundry United Methodist Church.

As a result of the seminar, the Swansboro group determined an action plan for their church to raise awareness of hunger issues, using local resources in four events throughout the next year, including packing beans and rice to feed the hungry overseas.

Looking at the wide variety of hunger problems, one of the participants concluded, "There is a 'collage' of things to work on."

The trip was sponsored by the Swansboro Church and Society Committee (Missions and Outreach).

The leaders of the Seminar included the Rev. Rachel Moser, associate pastor at Swansboro UMC, and Sarah "Phyz" Smith, director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry.

* The Rev. Dr. Jim Brewster and his wife, Adele Hyla-Brewster, co-chair the Church & Society Committee which is part of the Mission and Outreach ministry at Swansboro UMC.

Deepening effectiveness in discipleship workshop offered

October 15 is the deadline for registering to attend a "Deepening Your Effectiveness in Discipleship" workshop. The same presentation will be given on Oct. 29 and 30 at the United Methodist Building in Garner.

The instructors are Dan Glover and Claudia Lavy. Glover and Lavy co-authored the book, "Deepening Your Effectiveness: Restructuring the Local Church for Life Transformation," (Discipleship Resources, 2006). They have been featured workshop leaders at the School of Congregational Development for three years, as well as, presenters at conference and local church workshops all across the denomination.

Each workshop, sponsored by the Conference Office of Connectional Ministries, will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 4:30 p.m. Identical presentations will be given on the two days, allowing participants to choose to attend on Friday or Saturday, Oct. 29 and 30. Pastors and lay members of local churches are encouraged to attend, either together or on different days. The only cost for the workshop is \$10 which will cover the cost of lunch. Participants will find the workshop an interactive experience. They will come to recognize the benefits of a plan of discipleship for the local church and steps for developing a plan for forming disciples of Jesus Christ.

For more information or to get a registration form, select "Events" on the conference website, nccumc.org, and click on "Deepening Your Effectiveness in Discipleship."

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Listening. Learning. Leading.®

Order of Elders hears from Dr. William J. Abraham

By Para Drake *

On Tuesday, Sept. 14, Conference Board of Ordained Ministry President, the Rev. Robert Bergland, called the Order of Elders together for a day apart for study, renewal, and fellowship.

Opening worship with Holy Communion set the day with The Rev. Dr. William J. Abraham preaching. Few announcements and few distractions allowed the group to settle into his words in both the worship-preaching, "The Point of it All: A Sermon on Colossians 1:24-2:3" and the presentation, and the teaching, "At Full Liberty in the Flight from the Wrath to Come: A Practical Platform for United Methodists."

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. welcomed and the Rev. Paul Stallsworth introduced Abraham, Albert Cook Outler professor of Wesley Studies and the Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor of Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, as "...a fearless truth-teller in the Church of Jesus Christ."

With his Irish brogue, Abraham set the group at ease, noting, "I share your calling as an elder and as a preacher...It is a great pleasure to leave the high living and low thinking of South Bend and come here to the low living and high thinking of North Carolina."

As Abraham unpacked the passage of scripture, he brought Paul's letter to life, exposing his rhetorical strategy for the purpose of bringing the church at Colossae along to a higher level of discipleship through his description of ministry.

Abraham notes, "It is grounded in a divine call and gift. 'I have become a minister of the church, according to God's administration that was given to me for you...' and explains, '[Paul's] work is not grounded professionally in his own set of choices; it has come as a divine mandate and a privilege...it did not arise out of

The presentations by Dr. Abraham are available for online viewing at the NC Conference website. Visit nccumc.org, select the Resources menu and Video Room.

a family heritage...it did not come after he went through some kind of vocational counseling service. God had converted him, confronted him, encountered him, seized him, and then...his ministry was given him as a gift."

Abraham reminded the gathered elders of the divine calling of God – a gift, a privilege, with "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Lofty words, set off with flourish, but with the surprise: Paul's understanding that his calling is grounded in the completion of the suffering that began in Christ.

In Col. 2:24, Paul writes, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for his

body, that is, the church."

The Order of Elders were promised a surprise – and Abraham delivered it, "This is certainly enough to give you a pain in the brain, to put your head in a theological head-spin. I know of no theory of the atonement that has taken this seriously."

Abraham further unpacked the ministry in terms of Paul's description of suffering on Christ's behalf as "the suffering that comes with living and working with people as they are. It is the kind of suffering that arises... because the sheep lose heart, they rebel, they attack, they complain and find fault...or it is the kind of suffering that arises because the shepherds of the sheep screw up; they act stu-

"At Full Liberty in the Flight from the Wrath to Come: A Practical Platform for United Methodists"

By Para Drake *

"God, take our minds and think through them; my lips and speak through them; our hearts and set them on fire for our neighbors" prayed The Rev. Dr. William J. Abraham as he began to present five of his 30 challenging theses to bring into one conversation theology, doctrine, and history of United Methodists today – in the 21st century."

He was speaking to the conference clergy Order of Elders meeting at Nashville UMC on Sept. 14.

Abraham's experience includes service in Belfast, Ireland and, presently as one of the many academics who, in his own words, are "envied, loved, despised, for a host of rea-

sons." Yet he "relishes time teaching in the local church."

His invitation to speak to the Order of Elders by Chair, the Rev. Robert Bergland, was consummated by a sense of that same "relish," knowing most of the elders present had come from local churches to hear him.

"Let me reiterate what a pleasure it is to be here and to have the honor of sharing with you today... I realize how busy you are, and how difficult it is to take out precious time for a full day of reflection like this one," he said.

Early Methodism

Drawing on John Wesley's work, Abraham's title "At Full Liberty in

See "At Full Liberty," pg. 5

pidly; they become incurably narcissistic; they use the church...they lose the plot. And there is the kind of suffering that comes from external sources...ridicule of the elite...opponents...disinformation...discrimination...legal action...overt attack...persecution and death. All this suffering arises because you stand your ground in faithfulness; you refuse to sacrifice your integrity; you stay in the trenches. And folk inside and outside the church let you have it!"

Concluding his message, Abraham harkened to "our Father in God, Mr. Wesley himself" who endured criticism by his colleagues, and presented his field preachers an extensive list of the "catalogue of suffering" to which they could look forward.

All in all, Abraham observes, of Mr. Wesley's journals, the suffering, along with his sense of "special providence" was taken "in his stride" as he crossed paths with folks like Dame Summerhill of Bristol who, after hearing him preach there, walked 125 miles to hear him preach and another 125 miles back home again.

Abraham said, "It is surely this kind of mixture of suffering and joy that Paul is describing" for "My brothers and sisters in the Order of Elders, ours is a glorious ministry. We have been called. We are instruments...set apart to preach and teach and administer the sacraments and attend to right order in the church, the body of Christ. And our ultimate goal is to see Christ formed in our people, the hope of glory itself! That ultimately is the point of it all!"

Abraham presented the reminder of the call to ministry, at once joy and suffering, not for the sake of humankind, but for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and an assignment writer for the NCC Christian Advocate.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

“At Full Liberty in the Flight from the Wrath to Come” From page 4

the Flight from the Wrath to Come: A Practical Platform for United Methodists,” points to Wesley’s letter to the early Methodists at the time of the war to separate the colonies from the Empire, revealing with clarity “that we have to think things through for ourselves...”

“The Flight from the Wrath to Come” is nothing less than the basic requirement for membership in a Methodist Class Meeting, “the desire not to be left to our self-destructive desires.”

Rooted in Wesleyan heritage and tradition of practicality, Abraham notes the tension between “accountability and urgency” in the second phrase, as it makes clear that “the issues before us are momentous.” His remarks, Abraham explained, are pointed to “United Methodist People, starting with myself, rather than some amorphous movement or abstraction,” or Methodism (with a “little” m).



Dr. William J. Abraham addresses the ORder of Elders. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Five theses

In sum, five theses were presented by Abraham:

1. In terms of primitive Christianity, the United Methodist Church historically “is genuinely different from both its Catholic and Protestant siblings and that deserves a fresh and full implementation in our own day and generation”
2. “Gaining clarity about the mission of making disciples is an essential first step in the ordering of the life of the UMC.” The scriptural mandate does not include “for the transformation of the world,” which he sees as essentially God’s own work.
3. “The UMC should take the next 12 years and figure out how to actually make robust disciples of Jesus Christ.” There is a difference between membership and discipleship; making disciples begins with formation, learning the “great treasures of the canonical faith of the Church...that are the hallmark of Methodism...what it is to become a Christian...to be a Christian, and...to remain a Christian in a hostile inward and outward world.”
4. “United Methodists should immerse themselves afresh without apology in the actual canonical faith of the church bequeathed to us in the canonical treasures of United Methodism.” Abraham calls for a re-visitation of “our actual doctrinal heritage ...[and] to inhabit a genuinely theological and spiritual interpretation of our life and work as a church...” Further, he underlines the issue, “...our fundamental challenges as a church are spiritual and theo-

logical; they require theological and spiritual description and analysis... [providing]... insight on restructuring, on mission, culture, and values, and on best practices, that washes across the church again and again.”

5. Regardless of the work in the “wider church” leaders have both “responsibility and privilege... to do all we can personally to get on with the work of ministry and mission as we are and where we are.” Abraham observes that “we can no longer sit around and wait for others to fix the church...”; rather “we are going to stand up and do all we can, where we are, to implement a robust vision of United Methodism as a living edition of early Christianity with a clear commitment to making disciples of Jesus Christ.”

By way of a passage from “The Life of John Wesley,” Abraham pointed to Wesley’s love of Isaiah’s prophecy, “in its full form: the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. [Wesley] saw his beloved Methodism as an instrument in the hand of providence, fulfilling this remarkable promise.”

Christ’s promise

Abraham’s conclusion pointed to Christ’s “promise to his temple not to this or that movement of revival...” as he advised, “so we should take heart and stand tall not in our own strength but in the promise and power of God to the holy temple in which he has placed us.we can still offer our fragile life and work to that holy temple whose founder and

architect is God.”

In the field, the gathered elders considered what his remarks would mean for the local church.

Regina Henderson (Fayetteville District) asked how his five theses related to Sunday morning worship.

Abraham’s response, “Not directly. I’m relaxed about worship; It’s got to have substance...it’s not about I, me – It’s theocentric...centered on the reality of the Triune God.”

Paul Stallworth (New Bern District) preceded his question with a statement of his surprise that there was no reference to truth / the truth, “Why did you not mention truth?”

Abraham responded with the observation that “truth” is a philosophical question noting, “When we worry about truth, we’re in second order questioning and [the church is] held hostage by philosophers.”

Another question drew Abraham into a reflection upon the Orders of set-apart ministry, such as elders and deacons, as diachronic gifts of the Holy Spirit which “take on the care of the faith from generation to generation...to be exercised as gifts of the Spirit. All we do is meant to be from the Holy Spirit.”

David Banks (Sanford District) wondered whether thesis five could be divorced from the other four.

In his response, Abraham affirmed “absolutely” and continued to unpack the notion that renewal of the church “is intergenerational and a long haul” as he emphasized that waiting for “someone else” to do the work is not an option.

The issue of disappointment with perceived hypocrisy among young adults who criticize church’s “speaking

one value and doing another value” was raised by Mary Cauley (Rocky Mount District). Abraham used scripture to make his point, “there has always been wheat and tares—we can’t promise a pure church; we must be realistic with them.”

For the definition of a disciple, Abraham suggests, “a follower of Jesus Christ” who is “formed emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and doctrinally” in the Rule of Faith.”

He agreed that one challenge today rests in the many options for spiritual formation, recalling that the ancient world’s cultural milieu also was rife with options.

Lens of formation

Abraham’s closing remark speaks to his lens of formation: the primacy of the first order question, as Wesley taught in his sermons, “the knowledge and love of God – becoming, being, and living as a Christian.”

The Church’s task, in Abraham’s terms, is doctrinal and formational –located in the local church, doing and being the renewal of The United Methodist Church, working out salvation with fear and trembling regardless of location.

In his five (and likely the other 25) theses, Abraham presents a distinct challenge to The United Methodist Church and the People called Methodists. Yet, his work bears the mark of the Good News of the Kingdom of God, already come into being, and not yet complete.

* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and an assignment writer for the NCC Christian Advocate.

Worship planning as a team sport explored in Academy workshop led by Dr. Jim Harnish

By Julie Brown *

"Worship is the big door that invites people in – it is the central act...it is the place where we proclaim our identity most clearly," said Dr. James Harnish during the "Planning Worship that Works" workshop held in September.

Offered by the Academy for Leadership Excellence, 115 participants at the workshop explored team-centered worship planning techniques which have been effective at Hyde Park UMC in Florida where Harnish has been serving as senior pastor since 1992.

Referencing Bishop Robert Schnase's "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations," Harnish said that effective worship, passionate worship, had to come from a fire in the belly of the church leadership.

He asked participants to consider, "What is the road block in our present worship? What is in the way of people experiencing passionate worship?"

On the practical side of worship planning, he said the church needs to have a "ministry from the street to the seat" which addresses parking, seating, and helping guests feel welcome.

At Hyde Park, church leadership is asked to use the farthest parking to keep the spaces closer to the building available for visitors. "If your parking is not easy, your visitors could easily end up at Starbucks," he said.

Hyde Park leaders are also asked to use seating toward the front in order to keep the back rows, where a visitor might feel more comfortable, for guests.

Harnish challenged workshop participants to explore the "secret handshakes" at their church – are directional signs to key places such as children's Sunday school classes, restrooms, and the sanctuary clear and easily found? Does the church have traditions that might lead to a visitor feeling alienated? Are ushers helping visitors find a seat?

With practicalities addressed, Harnish said "the most critical part is to define...why we are worshipping. Worship is a means of drawing us to God out of ourselves – it is not



Dr. Jim Harnish

consumer entertainment." He asked participants: "Why should people come to your church?"

Harnish said it is crucial to understand the people in the local community which God is calling the church to reach.

In addition to gathering demographic information, he asked, "What are the hungers and needs for this population?" The answers to this question help shape worship.

Addressing the common stylistic debates, Harnish stated, "It is not about the 'worship wars' battle – it is about what God is calling us to be and to do."

He encouraged worship planners to keep in mind that the mission is more important than which methods are used and theology is more important than effectiveness. "Stay in the mainstream of the Wesleyan heritage," he said, "We are called to be consistent with our theology. This tradition has something to offer."

At Hyde Park, the traditions of the liturgical year and the lectionary serve as guiding, uniting elements for the worship planning team.

The team concept is an alternative to what Harnish called "a singles tennis match" where the pastor selects the scripture, plans the sermon, and lobs the ball, represent-

ing worship, over the net to notify the music leader. The music leader then makes a plan and returns the worship planning ball to the pastor for final review.

Instead of the tennis match, Harnish suggests the "team sport" model as an alternative.

While the Hyde Park team structure continues to evolve, the current planning team is organized into four areas: the Pastoral Team, the Spiritual Direction Team, the Creative Team, and the Logistics Team. Each has specific focus areas which flow back into the larger design process. (See sidebar for more information on each team's responsibilities.)

This approach is not limited to larger churches (Hyde Park has 900 in worship each week). Harnish said that the team model can be adapted to churches of any size.

In a smaller church, the four areas could be combined into one team of 6-8 members. The main purpose of using a team approach is to "draw together lay people, musicians, pastors...and take a wider reading into the spiritual pulse of the congregation....and unite the team in discerning what God wants us to do in each service," he said. "The most important thing is to pray together. It is harder work than when I did it by myself, but it's a heck of a lot more fun."

The worship design process takes

a long-range view, planning 3-6 months in advance. By doing so, the planners can develop scripturally-based themes in response to the lectionary, current needs within the congregation, and the church's mission.

Because of the long-range planning, opportunities open up which can help a church be more inviting and engaging to visitors, said Harnish. He said that the planning team intentionally develops themes to capitalize on seasonal opportunities and "starts something new on Christmas and Easter so that visitors have something to come back to the next week."

He closed the workshop asking, "Whatever made us think discipleship would be easy? It is in dying that new life is born. We allow new life into our worship ministry so that the world might be more like the kingdom of God."

The next Academy workshop in the National Leader Series is "Ultimately Responsible" led by Sue Nilson Kibbey of Ginghamburg UMC.

The workshop will explore laity and clergy "walking side-by-side in servant leadership." It is being offered Nov. 9 in Greenville and Nov. 10 in Raleigh.

* Julie Brown is a member of Fuquay-Varina UMC.

Worship design teams cover 4 areas

Pastoral Team:

Suggests the overall theme, biblical focus, and weekly scripture for a 3-6 month period. Considers the question: "What is the Spirit saying to us about the needs of this particular congregation/community at this particular time?" Always builds themes from a scriptural foundation and ties them into the church's mission. Looks at three types of messages – internal (issues such as living a life of prayer, human hurts), horizontal (ministry to the world, relationships with others), vertical (focused on the nature of God). Ensures a balance in the biblical life of the church in worship through balanced use of Old and New Testament scripture and a balanced use of narrative, didactic (teaching) and prophetic messages.

Spiritual Direction Team:

Includes pastors, lay leader, music leaders, and other gifted laity. Works 6-8 weeks in advance. Meets twice a month for two hours. Meets as a group once to discuss new series themes; then breaks into groups of 2-3 people to plan out

individual services. Starts with the scripture identified by the Pastoral Team and asks "Why would somebody need to hear this?" Defines a "desired outcome" addressing how the service calls people to respond to the Word. Outlines the mood or spirit of the service. Works to link worship planning and themes to adult education offerings.

Creativity Team:

Includes pastors, media and music staff, gifted laity. Works 3-4 weeks in advance. Meets twice a month for 1-2 hours. Uses thematic material from the Spiritual Direction Team and translates it into creative elements for worship. Defines what image/metaphor most concretely communicates the service's theme. Has goal that creative elements support the message but do not draw attention to themselves.

Logistics Team:

Works out the details to make worship happen. Has philosophy that they are most effective "when no one knows we're there."

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Imagine No Malaria initiative reaching out to provide the children of Sierra Leone with nets, vitamins, medicine

UMNS—Through Imagine No Malaria, a tangible expression of the Global Health Initiative, the people of The United Methodist Church have committed \$2 million to distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets in Sierra Leone, where malaria is a leading cause of death.

The November 2010 distribution of 2.5 to 3 million nets will provide almost every household with three nets per family. Additionally, an integrated health program will reach 95 percent of Sierra Leone's children with Vitamin A supplements and treatments for intestinal worms.

"It's astounding that with our partners, we will help to protect an entire country's vulnerable population from malaria and other diseases of poverty," said Bishop Thomas Bickerton, chairperson of The United Methodist Church's Global Health Initiative.

Collaborative effort

Partners in the program include the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (National Malaria Program) of Sierra Leone, the International Federation of the Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies (IFRC), the Association of African Leaders, and the United Nations Foundation. Doctors without Borders and CARE are also new partners in this initiative.

The United Methodist Church's health system in Sierra Leone, particularly its network of birth attendants in rural clinics, will participate as community educators and as part of the follow-up measurement and evaluation team.

Staff from the United Methodist Committee on Relief will travel to Freetown, Sierra Leone over

the next months to meet with the National Malaria Partnership officers and receive an update on the development of the November 2010 Campaign Action Plan.

The initiative to distribute bed nets nationwide in Sierra Leone was announced at the 2009 One World Against Malaria Summit in Washington, DC. The event brought together global and U.S. faith leaders,

high-profile political officials, global health leaders, and senior representatives from the United Nations and international institutions to focus on working in partnership to eliminate deaths from malaria by 2015.

About Imagine No Malaria

Imagine No Malaria is ministry of the people of The United Methodist Church to eliminate death and suffer-

ing from malaria in Africa by 2015.

With a goal of raising \$75 million to improve health infrastructure and empower a sustainable victory over the disease, Imagine No Malaria is an opportunity to rethink how the church is opening doors to those who need it most.

For more information, visit the initiative's website at www.ImagineNoMalaria.org.



Pray: God can do more than we can ever imagine.

Know: The people of The United Methodist Church have embraced this cause.
You can change a life.

Act: Get your church involved.
A pledge of just \$28 per month will change 100 lives.

"Let us not love with words,
but with actions and in truth."

1 John 3:18

**IMAGINE
NO
MALARIA**

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of
The United Methodist Church

2010 State of the Church Report available online

The median age of United Methodists, the number of professing members around the world and current giving trends are among the topics in the 2010 State of The Church report. The report is available online at www.umc.org/sotc2010.

"United Methodists are making great strides in the Four Areas of Focus of the denomination," said Bishop John Hopkins of the Ohio East Episcopal Area and chair of the Connectional Table.

Linking emotional health and spiritual maturity

In January 2010, the NC Conference entered into a relationship with CareNet for clergy counseling and church consultation. CareNet is part of the Baptist Hospital system based in Winston-Salem and offices have been established in eastern NC for at least 10 years.

CareNet provides faith-based counseling for clergy members of the NC Conference and their families by appointment at one of their 11 offices within the bounds of the NC Conference. Sessions may be covered by BCBS Health Insurance with co-pay at the time of the appointment. In the event that pastors are not in a location convenient to one of the offices, the CareNet counselors are pleased to refer to a faith-based service in the area.

For a complete description of services provided go to www.nccumc.org, and click on Resources, and Clergy Counseling and Consultation. For the list of CareNet offices and contact information, also under Resources, click on Health and Wholeness and CareNet locations.

The following commentary was written by the president of CareNet.

Commentary by Steven N. Scoggin*

"What a long time it can take to become the person one has always been!" Thus says Parker Palmer in his book, "Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation," which explores the quest we are all on to find our true calling.

For 25 years, my call as a pastoral counselor has been to be a faithful companion who walks alongside those who have found the courage to search for their "birthright gift of self."

Educated as a theologian and clinician, my ministry has stood at the intersection of emotional pain and spiritual confusion. The interdependent relationship between the emotions and spirit where improvement in one area informs improvement in the other is much like the dilemma of the chicken and the egg.

Yet, the paradox is that many times in the midst of our darkest periods emotionally are the times our spiritual sensitivities paves the way toward wholeness.

"Life is an experiment with truth," says Parker Palmer.

We begin our lives unable to hide the truth of who we are as children but over time we discover ways to cover this truth with protective masks, lies, power, ego, and deception. The voice of our childhood succumbs too many voices we hear and the noise prompts us to lose touch with our uniqueness.

Failure to awaken to this conundrum that the life we are living is not ours but someone else's can set us forth on a path of imbalance and ultimately pain and despair.

We are disabused of our original giftedness in the first half of our lives and, if awakened to our loss can spend the second half trying to recover and reclaim the gift we once possessed.

The way back home is simple but

profoundly difficult in a world that is loud and calls us towards activity rather than receptivity.

We seek out guidance everywhere from without and the therapist's office becomes the modern day confessional. The link that bridges the gulf between the protective masks we all wear where our ego is the source of our identity and our true self where our God-given identity resides is the practice and discipline of listening.

We listen everywhere for guidance except from within.

In this quest for truth and wholeness is an often ignored dimension we are invited to embrace is what we dislike and find shameful about ourselves as well as what we are confident and proud of.

The link between mind and soul, emotional health and spiritual maturity, is found only under quiet conditions, where the soul can speak its truth.

There is a Hasidic tale that reveals, with amazing brevity, both the universal tendency to want to be someone else and the ultimate importance of becoming one's self: Rabbi Zusya, when he was an old man said, "In the coming world, they will ask me: Why were you not Moses? They will ask me: Why were you not Zusya?"

See "Linking emotional health," page 11



The Rev. Joann Turner, visitation pastor at St. Paul UMC in Goldsboro, participated in the Clergy Health Initiative pilot program, the forerunner of Spirited Life.

Spirited Life enrollment open through Oct. 31 *continued from page 1*

enroll by Oct. 31. They then will be randomly assigned to one of three groups. Each group will receive wellness services for two years of the program, with the first group beginning in January 2011. The remainder of the time, they will serve as a comparison group to the other two groups.

This is the first combined weight loss and stress reduction program in the nation to receive rigorous study, and one of only a handful in which programming lasts more than 12 months.

By studying the effects on pastors' health—measured through periodic surveys and instant-read blood screenings—the Clergy Health Initiative hopes to be able to offer a proven program that can be adopted by other United Methodist conferences and faith communities.

To learn more about Spirited Life or to register for the program, visit www.spiritedlife.org.

* Kate Rugani is communications manager for the Thriving Communities Initiatives at Duke Divinity School. The article and photos are reprinted with the permission of Duke Divinity School. It appeared in the Fall 2010 issue of Divinity magazine.

Church Mice



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RETHINKCHURCH Give a Bible to someone who's searching

For less than the cost of a matinee movie ticket or a couple of gallons of gas, the New Testament can be placed in the hands of a spiritual seeker who has responded to The United Methodist Church's advertisements through the Rethink Church campaign.

A core message of the church is that "the church is a verb." What if it was demonstrated that this message is not simply a fad but is deeply rooted in Scripture?

The Rethink Church Edition Common English Bible (New Testament) does just that. It introduces the Scriptures and The United Methodist Church's response to Christ. Special pages in the front help seekers continue on the journey to biblical understanding. Through Rethink Church's new seeker site, those searching for meaning and relationship with God can receive a free copy of this Common English Bible New Testament.

Making Bibles available to seekers

United Methodist members and friends are encouraged to make gifts of \$5—the cost to print and ship one Bible to a seeker.

Gifts can be accepted online at www.umcom.org/rethinkchurch or by texting the word Bible to 27722 to make a \$5 gift via cell phone billing. Gifts made by mail can be made payable to The Foundation for UM Communications: 810 12th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37209.

Churches may also order copies at \$5 each to give away to church visitors or at Rethink Church events in their communities.



The Common English Bible

The Common English Bible is not a revision or update of an existing translation. It is a new translation designed to meet the needs of Christians as they build a strong and meaningful relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

A key goal of the translation team is to make the Bible accessible to a broad range of people. It is written at a comfortable level for more than half of all English readers and seeks to make the Bible more readable and understandable without compromising scholarship.

As the translators do their work, reading specialists from more than a dozen denominations review the texts to ensure a smooth, natural reading experience.

Easy readability can enhance church worship and participation

and personal Bible study. It also encourages children and youth to discover the Bible, perhaps for the first time.

"The Rethink Church Edition is a powerful tool for evangelism," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "It introduces the Bible and denomination to seekers with sensitivity to their worldview, in welcoming language."

A new translation

Committed to the entire church of Jesus Christ, the Common English Bible represents the work of a diverse team with broad scholarship, including more than 115 scholars from 22 faith traditions in American, African, Asian, European and Latino communities. As a result, the English translation of ancient words has an uncommon relevance for a broad audience of Bible readers—from children to scholars.

The translation is sponsored by the Common English Bible Commit-

tee, an alliance of denominational publishers that includes The United Methodist Publishing House. The full Bible translation will be available in fall 2011.

The translation was funded by the Church Resources Development Corp., which allows for cooperation among denominational publishers in developing and distributing Bibles, curriculum and worship materials.

The CEB Committee meets periodically and consists of publishers from the following denominations: Disciples of Christ (Chalice Press); Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (Westminster John Knox Press); Episcopal Church (Church Publishing Inc); United Church of Christ (Pilgrim Press); and The United Methodist Church (Abingdon Press).

To learn more about the new Common English Bible, visit www.commonenglish.com. To learn more about the Rethink Church advertising and welcoming campaign, visit umcom.org/rethinkchurch.

** \$5 will be added to mobile phone bills/deducted from prepaid accounts. Msg & Data rates may apply. Details at mGive.org/T*

RETHINKCHURCH

Congregational resources, seeker website addresses change

Congregational resources for the Rethink Church advertising and welcoming campaign have moved to a new website address: umcom.org/rethinkchurch, though the site content remains the same. The website that previously housed congregational resources, RethinkChurch.org, will become the primary seeker site that is featured in Rethink Church advertising, beginning this fall.

"Research shows that RethinkChurch.org resonates most strongly with the seekers we are trying to reach with our denominational advertising," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "This website address reinforces the message we want non-United Methodist seekers to take away from our advertising—that we are rethinking church."

The RethinkChurch.org seeker site will feature more site engagement capabilities and content offerings than its seeker site predecessor, 10thousanddoors.org. RethinkChurch.org visitors will be able to read, watch, comment, and interact on topics that are important both to them and to The United Methodist Church—from the environment, to global health, to disaster relief. An interactive map will connect seekers to a church in their area, based upon ministry offerings and events listed in a church's Find-a-Church profile.

See "Rethink Church website addresses," page 10

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Methodist University choir program offers performances at churches within the conference

The Methodist University Choir Program is offering performances to churches within the NC Conference for services or special events from October 2010 through May 2011.

"In the past three years, we have performed at over 15 United Methodist churches, from South Carolina to New Jersey," said Michael Martin, M.M.Ed., M.M., director of choral activities and music education at Methodist University. "Some performances were limited to Sunday services while others were for special afternoon or evening concert events."

There are four performing groups within the MU Choir Program. The Methodist University Chorale, directed by Michael Martin, is the premier choral ensemble of the University. The ensemble consists of approximately 24-32 vocalists selected through a voice placement process and performs traditional/advanced choral literature from all periods. In addition to its regular concert schedule, the Chorale tours each spring, and has made appearances in Orlando and New York City.

The MU Chamber Singers is an octet directed by Michael Martin that is selected through an audition process and made up of members of the MU Chorale. The ensemble performs vocal jazz, madrigals, and pop a cappella, etc., and is available for

smaller venues around campus and the immediate Fayetteville area.

The Noblemen, directed by Michael Martin, is a men's chorus ensemble open to all men in the MU community who love to sing and enjoy camaraderie through music. Selections from every music epoch will be performed, from serious forms to pop/contemporary a cappella forms.

The Treble Tones, directed by Elizabeth Winstead, is a one-credit ensemble that is open to all women in the MU community. Membership includes students from all disciplines and is intended to provide a foundation in the area of vocal technique, while achieving a high standard of excellence in repertoire selected from all periods and musical styles. The Noblemen and Treble Tones generally perform together.

The groups require a 30-day notice to perform at a service or special event. "If possible, we ask that a donation be made to help offset travel expenses," said Martin. "The MU Chorale is also trying to raise funds for its upcoming European tour in March of 2011, which will include performances in Amsterdam, Brussels, and Paris."

To request a performance by one of the groups, call Michael Martin at (910) 630-7153 or send an e-mail to mmartin@methodist.edu.

Join the NC Conference Outreach Ministry email list

The Outreach Team invites everyone, particularly local congregation mission coordinators and mission team members, to join the Outreach Ministry e-mail list. The Outreach Ministry office regularly sends out short e-mails highlighting local and global mission opportunities, outreach information, and mission resources that are available to local congregations and individuals. To be added to the list, please e-mail Kathy Reavis at kreavis@nccumc.org with the e-mail subject, "Please add me to the Outreach list."

Rethink Church websites from page 9

(Churches are encouraged to update their Find-a-Church profile now.)

Rethink Church congregational resources help churches to participate in the Rethink Church advertising and welcoming campaign. Resources include a Rethink Church overview and FAQ, church marketing tutorials, advertising samples, graphics, worship aids, and more.

About Rethink Church

Rethink Church, the next evolution of The United Methodist Church's "Open hearts" welcoming and advertising campaign, highlights the many opportunities available within United Methodist churches to engage with the world—from literacy programs to feeding the poor. Targeting a globally minded 18- to 34-year-old audience, Rethink Church advertisements appear in traditional and new media, and direct viewers to the website RethinkChurch.org, where visitors may interact, learn more about the church, and search for involvement opportunities. Rethink Church resources are available to local congregations at umcom.org/rethinkchurch.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Conference Media Center,

located in the United Methodist Building in Garner loans educational resources to conference churches without a membership charge. The only charge is the return postage to send a borrowed item back to the center for use by other churches. The Media Center website (<http://nccumc.org/mediacenter>) is being updated every few days with new content to keep people informed of what resources are available to all churches in the North Carolina Conference. These features include:

Subject Guides – Each subject guide provides a comprehensive list of what is available from the Media Center on a specific subject along with instructions on how to search the catalog for these items. Links to websites with additional resources are also included. Current subject guides focus on Hispanic Resources and Peace and Justice Resources.

Resources for Upcoming Observances – When churches or the U.S. is calling attention to an issue with shared observance dates, the Media Center will list items that can be borrowed to help a church participate. Previous suggestions have been available for National Alcohol & Drug Recovery Month and World Communion Sunday.

Reviews – The Media Center will periodically post reviews of resources that are available for borrowing. When borrowing resources from the Media Center, a form may be sent along with the resource to evaluate whether or not the resource was useful. Some of these reviews may be posted on this site if given permission. An online form will be coming soon.

New Resources – As new resources are added to the Media Center's catalog, they will be posted on the Media Center page. Choose Resources under Blog Topics to see all of the postings about resources.

Online Resources – The Media Center is gathering links to websites that provide free resources for download. Go to the Electronic Resources page to see what is there so far.

Recommended Resources – Every season, this page will be updated with recommended resources for Sunday School class or Bible study. All age groups will be covered. See the Fall recommendations now.

Contact Us Online – You can send an instant message or a tweet to the Media Center to ask about the availability of resources, or ask any other resource questions. Use the chat box on the left side of any Media Center web page. Read the Contact page to learn more.

Coming Soon – Write a review, suggest a purchase, an online request form, a weekly newsletter, a brand new catalog, and more. What new features should be on the Media Center website? Let Dallas know.



Linking emotional health and spiritual maturity Continued from page 8

So, as a pastoral counselor, one way I invite persons to begin to reconnect with their spiritual self is to seek clues in stories from their younger years, when they lived closer to their true self.

It is through our stories that we find those "thin narratives" that have shaped who we are and the faces we have tried to put on as our own.

We find our calling by claiming our story and becoming the author. By being who God has created us to be, we dwell in the world as Zusya rather than straining to be Moses.

This journey towards spiritual maturity is arrived at only after a long journey through alien lands. It is most akin to the ancient idea of pilgrimage—"a transformative journey to a sacred center" full of hardships, darkness, and peril.

It is a journey where we are invited not to distance ourselves from the shameful, fearful, and embarrassing chapters of our story but to find the grace to embrace, listen, and learn that these truths are important for our moving forward in reclaiming that which has been lost.

It continues to be my experience that the way to God is not up but down. When the way we have been living becomes closed I invite people to look down and within before looking up and out.

Let me illustrate this by the example of depression. The underground is a potentially life-giving place to which depression takes us; a place where we come to understand that the self is not set apart or special or superior but is a common mix of good and evil and a place we share in common with others.

To embrace this holistic view of life is to accept a more demanding life because once you embrace this you must live your whole life from the mountain to the valley.

Life becomes a mysterious soup of joy and sorrow of which are critical ingredients for a whole life.

Theologically, it is to embrace a cross, symbol of death and ultimate disconnection with an empty tomb, symbol of new life and reconnection.

Depression is the ultimate experience in being disconnected. It deprives one of relatedness which is the lifeline of existence.

Like Job's visitors we often offer sympathy, explanations, and solutions to the despondent out of our own discomfort and feelings of helplessness. Many times our sincere efforts to help the depressed only compound the weight of their darkness.

What we can offer the depressed

is not so much our words as our authentic presence.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke says, "Love...consists in this, that two solitudes protect and border and salute each other."

This is the kind of love that does not invade the inward awfulness with false comfort or advice but simply stands on its boundaries, modeling respect of the other and their journey and the courage to let it be.

Rilke describes a love that neither invades nor avoids the soul's suffering. It is a love in which we represent God's love to a suffering person, a God who does not fix us but gives us strength by suffering with us.

By standing respectfully and faithfully at the borders of another's solitude, we may mediate the love of God to a person who needs something deeper than any human being can give.

As I learned from one of my clinical supervisors along the way, Dr. Bill Oglesby, depression is not the enemy trying to crush you but can be the hand of a friend, pressing you down to the ground on which it is safe to stand.

Parker Palmer reminds us commenting on his own depression that sometimes we can live our lives so ungrounded and at such an altitude that it becomes unsafe.

The problem when living at such altitudes is that when we slip, as we always do, we have a long way to fall and the landings can literally kill us.

The grace of being pressed down to the ground is also simple; when we slip and fall, it is usually not fatal, and we can get up.

So, in the case of depression it can be the hand of a friend pressing us down to ground on which it is safe to stand—the ground of our truth, nature, with its complex mix of limits and gifts, liabilities and assets, darkness and light

This delicate interplay between the life of our emotions and our spirit is a relationship where what is underground/unseen informs the shape of what is seen.

This "hidden wholeness" that Parker Palmer describes transcends shoring up the emotions to grounding our mind in the vitality of the spirit. This deeper reality was the call I responded to thirty-three years ago as a young seminarian.

It was the call to walk alongside those who had lost their way with the hopes of pointing them towards the "truth that can set us free."

** Steven N. Scoggin is president of CareNet, Inc., a subsidiary of Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.*

Grant available for caregiving ministry with older adults

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is providing grants related to older adult ministry in the area of Caregiving Ministry in 2011, the General Board of Discipleship has announced.

The grants, part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries, will be available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions.

All grant applications will be reviewed by the United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries. The committee is also responsible for the selection process.

Submission deadline is Jan. 15, 2011. Grants will be awarded by the committee in Fall 2011.

For further information and an application, go to www.aging-umc.org and select Caregiving Ministry with Older Adults Grant Application.

UMC's Infoserv reference desk now offering live online chat

InfoServ, the official information service of The United Methodist Church, now offers an online "Live Chat" feature that allows customers to communicate directly with representatives via the web.

"Chat with InfoServ" encourages real time conversations between members, church pastors, agency staff and others with questions about The United Methodist Church.

InfoServ is a ministry of United Methodist Communications.

Started in 1974 as a "reference desk" for those who have questions about United Methodist beliefs, worship practices, positions on social issues, local church questions and more, InfoServ averages about 1,700 inquiries a month.

In 2009, the agency announced that InfoServ would discontinue phone support and transition to only e-mail and online service to provide better stewardship of resources, while continuing to offer high quality service. Over the past several

years, at least 60 percent of contacts with InfoServ have come via e-mail.

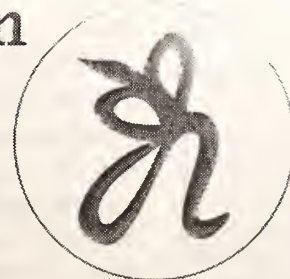
Comparisons of satisfaction levels, as shown in customer surveys, indicated that e-mail provides an effective means for assisting consumers.

Additional information and "frequently asked questions" were also added to UMC.org to provide a self-service option that customers can access anytime.

"This 'Live Chat' feature restores an immediate person-to-person connection with those who depend on InfoServ for answers to their questions about The United Methodist Church," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "Not only is it customer-friendly, it is budget-friendly as we continue to provide answers quickly, accurately, and economically."

Customers are able to submit questions via e-mail at infoserv@umc.org. Answers to the most frequently asked questions are also available online at infoserv.umc.org.

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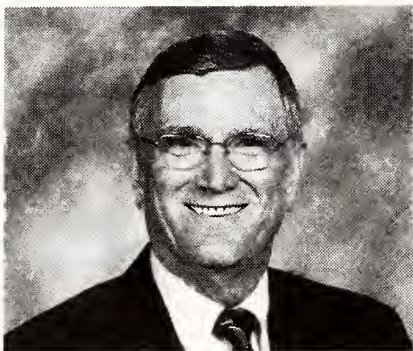
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

November 7, 2010

Text: Psalm 66:1-12
"God Is Awesome"

At first it did not make any sense. I read it again. Surely the psalmist has missed a signal.

Psalm 66:3 reports that God's power is so great, that God's enemies cringe before God.

That is not what I see when I look around me. That verse does not fit

the reality I observe.

Machines of war do not seem to cringe before God. Barons of financial chicanery do not seem to cower before the Almighty.

Ambassadors of hate and prejudice do not seem to be frightened of God. Purveyors of lust and abuse do not seem to be in awe of Jehovah. Sellers of cheap grace and false prosperity do not seem to flinch before God.

What is it then that leads the psalmist to proclaim with great energy: "Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you" (Psalm 66:3)?

Then, I read the entire psalm again and noticed something.

The writer moves back and forth among the present tense, the past tense, and an implied future tense. For example, "give to (God) glorious praise" (Psalm 66:2b)—present tense; for example, "He turned the sea into dry land" (Psalm 66:6a)—past tense; for example, "all the earth worships you" (Psalm 66:4a)—implied future tense.

The God who is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore, does not keep time the way we do!

God is able to look at what seems to be certain defeat (vv. 10-12) and can see victory (v. 12b).

God is able to be with God's people before the Red Sea and see the Promised Land (v. 6).

The psalmist has reminded us that God's perspective is for the long haul.

It might seem now that the enemies of God, the forces of evil, are in major triumph, but the psalmist sees that in the final word—should we say the final Word?—God will triumph and "the enemies will cringe before God."

No wonder the psalmist invites us to make a joyful noise before God!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Journey to the Common Good* (Westminster John Knox), Walter Brueggemann has written: "Those who are living in anxiety, and fear, most especially fear of scarcity, have no time or energy for the common good. Anxiety is no adequate basis for the common good; anxiety will cause the formulation of policy and of exploitative practices that are

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

inimical to the common good, a systemic greediness that precludes the common good."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of yesterday, God of today, God of tomorrow, we rejoice that the tomb is still empty. In the midst of times that are troubled, in the heart of difficult days, help us to look back and see that Christ is risen; help us to look ahead and see that Christ is triumphant..."

November 14, 2010

Text: Psalm 90:1-12
"God Is Forever"

Early in our marriage, Toni and I were on a long trip with a tight budget. Driving back to our campus apartment at Drew University in Madison, NJ, we realized that if we paid all the tolls on the New York Thruway, we would not have enough money to pay to cross the George Washington Bridge.

Long before GPS systems, we took out a map we had gotten from the gas station and figured out how we could exit into small towns just before every toll booth and then re-access the Thruway a few small towns later, after the toll booth.

This cat and mouse drive got us back to the big George Washington Bridge where we proudly paid the toll and drove home to Madison.

When the roads of life are painful or stressful or unrelenting, there can be a renewing power in getting back home.

The psalmist says that God has been that home for all generations (Psalm 90:1).

There are a number of ways of translating the words rendered "dwelling place." The same term would be used for the lair of an animal, the nest for a bird, the warren of a rabbit. The same term would be used for a place of retreat and refreshment, a den of safety and security, an abode, a home.

For some folks, home is not a happy place. It is a place of disappointment, pressure, or even terror.

In fact, as the psalmist describes what it is like for God to be our dwell-

ing place, there does not seem to be any room to hide: we fade and wither (v. 6); we are consumed by God's anger (v. 7); our secret sins are found out (v. 8); our years are soon gone (v. 10). Is this the comforting home to which you want to return? Is this the "dwelling place" that seems so inviting?

The prayer offered in verse 12 is the heart of the matter. Because our lives are short (v. 10), because when we are in God's presence (God's house) our own frailties become so clear (v. 7), because we are just "passing through" (vv. 5-6), we pray that God will teach us so we "number our days" (v. 12)—in other words, so we make each day count for something.

"Teach us...that we may gain a wise heart" (v. 12)—a discerning spirit that is able to tell the difference between God's will and our own will. It was not the last time we needed such a prayer.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (Harper One), Marcus Borg penned these words: "All of (these biblical writers) speak about new beginnings brought about by God. The exodus story speaks of liberation from victimization and bondage, the exile story speaks of the good news of 'coming home,' and the priestly story affirms that our past is not the final word about us."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Again O Lord, teach me..."

November 21, 2010

Text: Psalm 91:1-6, 9-16
"God Delivers and Protects"

Has anyone shot an arrow at you lately? Not to worry. This week's study text says we do not have to fear "the arrow that flies by day" (Psalm 91:5).

Have you seen any lions lately upon whom you wished to walk? Not to worry. This week's study text says that you will be able to do that.

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Adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

(Psalm 91:13)

Have you been worried recently that you might get caught in the nets of someone trying to trap a bird? Not to worry. This week's study text says God will get you out of such a mess. (Psalm 91:3)

These verses from Psalm 91 make me concerned about persons who seek the take the Scriptures literally! To take these passages literally is to miss the breadth of the beautiful images of how God protects and rescues God's people. Obviously, the psalmist has resorted to poetic language, to metaphors, to imagery, in an effort to find human language that would reflect what is to be revealed about the width of God's care.

If God is limited to protecting me from arrows, lions, and fowler's nets, I think I don't need such a God.

I've pretty much handled the lion thing by living in northern Durham County.

The last time I saw an arrow...well, you get the idea.

John Wesley wisely reminded us that the Bible is twice inspired: once when written and again when read.

The inspired language of this psalm loses its meaning if God does not inspire again for us to hear that we are really encountering here the breadth of God's protection and care.

The devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12 when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, but our Lord knew that there was a richer promise here than what would be tested by jumping off a tall building (Matthew 4:5-7).

Our culture demands that we be self-sufficient, but this lesson reminds us that the self is not the best place to look for sufficiency! Instead, turn to "my God, in whom I trust" (Psalm 91:2b).

What Someone Else Has Said:

David Lowes Watson (*God Does Not Foreclose*, Abingdon Press) writes "The question is not whether people opt for the Kingdom but whether they acknowledge it. Its fulfillment does not lie in the aggregate of those who cry 'Lord, Lord' but in the actualization of its axioms among all people."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin, "Thank you, Lord, for Your loving care and protection of me in life's hard places. In Your Son, we see that Your care does not make life pain-free, but can make life defeat-free..."

November 28, 2010

Thanksgiving time and these Advent days before celebrating the best Gift of all seem to be good occasions for me to say a personal word. The word is "Thanks." This study lesson completes nine years of my writing this series in the Advocate. Many readers greet me and express appreciation for something I long ago forgot that I wrote. God moves in mysterious ways! Can I meet you here next week as we begin Year Ten?

Text: Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-16, 23-24
"God Is All-Knowing"

Does the title of this week's lesson make you feel better or make you feel worse?

These verses are about how God knows everything about us, yet most of us have a few places in our lives that we'd like to keep hidden from God!

Confession of sin is not our way of letting God in on our secrets, as if God did not already know; confession is acknowledging before God that we too know that we have sinned.

In Psalm 139:5, the psalmist acknowledges that God has hemmed him in ("beset" in King James Version).

It seems like a scene in an action movie: the hero is trapped by those who chase after him. The difference here is that in the movie the hero gets away; in the psalm, the psalmist does not get away: ["...(you) lay your hand upon me."]

A strange image just crossed my mind: the joke about the dog that always chased cars but did not know what to do when it finally caught one!

What happens now that God has "caught" the psalmist? What happens now that God has "hemmed us in" (v.5)?

The psalmist sees God's watchful eye as a good thing. Note that in verse 24, the writer couples God's knowledge of him ("see if there is any wicked way in me") with God's promise to lead in God's way of life ("lead me in the way everlasting").

After all of the exposure of myself to God, I choose now not to run from God, but to be led by God. Not a bad plan!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Beacon Hill Press), John Wesley describes God's way of life: "What is Christian perfection? The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies, that

no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words and actions, are governed by pure love."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of Perfect Love, You have examined me and found places in my heart and thinking where love is in short supply. Come now with the fullness of Your gift and move me from emptiness to fullness, from wicked ways to loving ways, from despair to joy. In Jesus Christ, I see such perfectness and You have called me to be perfect as You are perfect..."

DEATHS

PEARSALL, John S. (Wilmington: retired) died March 2. A graveside service was held March 6 in Wilmington.

CHAFFIN, Lucille Jones, widow of Claude Chaffin, died June 24.

LUPTON, Johnny (New Bern incapacity leave) died Sept. 10. A graveside service was held Sept. 15 in Sea Level.

WIGGINS, Moeine, wife of Carson Wiggins (Burlington: retired), died Sept. 10. The funeral was held Sept. 12, at Grace UMC: Burlington.

conference CALENDAR

October

- | | | | |
|-------|--|-------|---|
| 1-3 | Weekend Mission Camp for Youth, St Paul UMC: Rocky Mount | 21 | Sexual Ethics Training, 9:30 a.m., First: Laurinburg for FA, RO, WI districts; call Sarah Cameron, 910-276-6641 to register |
| 2 | Workshop on Oral History and Digital History, Wilson | 25 | Sexual Ethics Training 9:30 a.m., St. James: Greenville for EC, GR, and NB districts, call Barbara Matthews, 252-756-3918 to register |
| 3 | World Communion Sunday | 30 | Sexual Ethics Training Make-up day, 10 a.m. Horne Memorial UMC, Clayton; call Linda Bourey at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 244 to register |
| 4 | Quadrennial Sexual Ethics Training, 9:30 a.m., Centenary: Smithfield for RA, RM, and GO districts; call Gina Harr 919-734-5324 to register | | |
| 8 | Clergy Financial and Retirement Planning Seminar, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., UM Building, Garner | | |
| 10 | Children's Sabbath | 2 | Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting |
| 11-12 | 2010 Convocation & Pastors' School, Duke Divinity School | 6 | Conference UMW DO-IT-DAY - Durham District |
| 12 | Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting | 9 | Day of Learning, "Ultimately Responsible" at St. James UMC: Greenville |
| 14-16 | Wesleyan Leadership Conference, West End UMC, Nashville, TN | 10 | Day of Learning, "Ultimately Responsible" at Edenton St. UMC: Raleigh |
| 16 | Conference UMW Annual Meeting, Methodist University, Fayetteville | 12-14 | Pilgrimage, Crown Center: Fayetteville |
| 17 | Laity Sunday | 12 | Board of Pensions, 10 0a.m. |
| 18 | Conference Connectional Table Meeting, | 19-21 | UMW Leadership Training Event (LTE) |
| | | 25-26 | Thanksgiving (UMB Closed) |
| | | 28 | United Methodist Student Day Special Sunday |

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

November

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Change date and location for Sexual Ethics training - Oct. 30

Please note the change of date for the Sexual Ethics Training make-up day from Thursday, Nov. 4 to Saturday, Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Due to the growing number of persons registering for the make-up day, the location for the Oct. 30 training has been moved to Horne Memorial UMC in Clayton, 121 East 2nd Street, Clayton, NC 27520-2476. To register for the make-up day, e-mail Linda Bourey at lbourey@nccumc.org so adequate meal plans can be made. For the other event dates, go to <http://nccumc.org/ministerial-relations>.

Project AGAPE director visits NC Conference - Oct. 20 to Nov. 8

Project AGAPE Director and NC-sponsored missionary, Nara Melkonyan, will be itinerating through the NC Conference from Oct. 20 - Nov. 8.

The project's focus is relief efforts in Armenia such as food, medical supplies, and medication. Project AGAPE also works with the Armenian Church to provide a holistic ministry in pastoral care, education, healthcare, agriculture and economic development.

Melkonyan is available to speak at worship services, UMW groups, UMM gathers, Sunday school classes, Wednesday night fellowship gatherings, mission and ministry team gatherings, and other venues. Consider inviting Nara to come and share the ministry of Project AGAPE, a ministry serving refugee families and other vulnerable people in Armenia.

For scheduling, please contact Rev. Bill Haddock at revbillh@nccumc.org, or (919) 772-2042. A love offering is requested to cover her in-conference travel expenses.

Registration open for Lay Academy of Christian Witness - Oct. 21-23

The Commission on Evangelism will be holding the LAY Academy of Christian Witness on Oct. 21-23 at Camp Rockfish. The cost is \$25 per person. Due to the desire to include several churches in this training, a maximum of 3 persons per church may attend. (This event is for first-time adult lay participants. Space is limited.) Room occupancy is 2-3 persons per room. Applications are on the website at <http://nccumcevangelism.org>. For additional information, e-mail caroldean@nccumc.org.

DBOM Pumpkin Run - Oct. 23

On Saturday, Oct. 23, the 4th Annual Great Pumpkin Run to support the ministry of DISCIPLE Bible Outreach, will be held on the lawn of Jamestown UMC in Jamestown, NC. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the 5k run begins at 8:30. One-mile walkers begin at 8:45 a.m. Consider this a chance to get out in the fresh air, support DBOM and exercise in the crisp autumn air. The event will include races for kids and a Halloween costume contest. Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org. Come have fun at the Pumpkin Run!

Pilgrimage - Nov. 12-14

Youth leaders, it is time to be planning for youth groups to attend Pilgrimage 2010 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville. The keynote speaker will be Bart Campolo and the Pilgrimage House Band will provide music. Pilgrimage is a time for youth and youth leaders to share worship, service, fellowship, and fun. Registration deadline is Oct. 25. Learn more and register at <http://nccpilgrimage.org>.

5K on Nov. 20 at Chestnut Ridge

A Family Fun Run will be held at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center in Effland, on Nov. 20.

This race is to help benefit the "Pass It On" Annual Fund camping which supports the NC Conference Camp & Retreat Ministry's programs, enhances facilities and equipment and helps send children and youth to camp through the campership scholarship program.

There will be a mini-race for younger members of participating families and a worship service will conclude the events. For more information and to register online go to www.campchestnutridge.org and select "5K Run on Nov 20" from the news listings.

Congress on Evangelism convenes January 2011 in Myrtle Beach

Set for Jan. 4-7, 2011 at the Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach, SC, the Congress on Evangelism is sponsored by the Council on Evangelism and the General Board of Discipleship with the support of The Foundation for Evangelism.

The congress meets every January at different locations presenting motivational speakers and workshops based on evangelism. Learn more and register online at <http://congressonevangelism.org/>.

Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land - January 2011

Travel with Bishop Gwinn on a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 2011. Depart on Jan. 24 and visit all the holy sites, worship together, experience the teachings of Bishop Gwinn, and walk where Jesus walked. Contact Harold Salmon, Conference Director of Tour Ministries at 919-377-2950.

Phyllis Tickle at Winter Soulstice - February 2011

The North Carolina Academy for Spiritual Formation has announced that nationally-recognized author and speaker Phyllis Tickle will be featured at Winter Soulstice, a Friday night-Saturday retreat to be held at Saint Francis United Methodist Church in Cary, Feb. 4-5, 2011.

Tickle will be presenting from her new book, "The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why." In her discussion, Tickle will explain signs indicating that Christendom is once again going through a reformation and will give hints about what can be expected. More details will be announced later. The Academy for Spiritual Formation is sponsored by The Upper Room, Nashville, TN and jointly sponsors the North Carolina 5-day Academy with the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Rethinking Worship & Song Event - March 1-3, 2011

A national event to introduce Worship & Song, a new collection of song and worship resources developed by The General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House has been announced for March 1-3, 2011 in Nashville, TN.

The Worship & Song print and digital resources are scheduled for release in February 2011. The event will include worship, singing, and learning, and features workshops with Carlton Young, Marcia McFee, Mark Miller, and many others. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/bsb5FD>.

around the CONFERENCE



Historic Jerusalem church celebrates homecoming

The last Sunday of September was Homecoming Sunday at Jerusalem, a historic church that has been special to people in Warren County and throughout North Carolina.

Dr. Bill Simpson, former district superintendent of the Rocky Mount District and the historian of the NC Annual Conference was the guest preacher. The choir led the singing of old gospel hymns and special anthems. Dinner was on grounds.

A gathering was held at the Robert Williams Gospel Oak to celebrate memories and heritage. The oak, about 200 yards from the sanctuary, served as the site for preaching by circuit riders.

Jerusalem is one of the oldest churches in Methodism beginning from a 1772 class meeting formed on Ebenezer Coleman's plantation. The church was chartered in 1773.

Dr. John Bergland noted that the day was a time to be "...among friends and in the holy presence of the Risen Christ." Bergland has served as pastor at Jerusalem since 2005.



In 1772, news spread along the south side of the Roanoke River that a Methodist circuit rider was going to preach under the big willow oak on Ebenezer Coleman's plantation. A crowd gathered and Robert Williams preached. The plantation became a regular preaching place on his Brunswick Circuit. The "Robert William's Tree," stood for centuries on the Coleman farm where Ronnie Perkinson, a descendant, now lives. It measured 27 feet around when it fell in 2007.



Millbrook UMC holds 9th Hispanic outreach camp

Millbrook UMC in Raleigh hosted their 9th annual Camp MUCHO (Millbrook United Church Hispanic Outreach) during the week of Aug. 2-6. The camp began in 2002 with 27 children. This year, 108 Latino children participated, making this year's camp the largest held at Millbrook. Campers were picked up at their homes in the morning, fed breakfast, and spent the morning in assembly, crafts, Bible lessons, music and recreation, similar to VBS. Following lunch, the campers and counselors went on afternoon excursions. These excursions included seeing a movie, roller skating, visiting Hill Ridge Farm and having a field day complete with snow cones. On Sunday, Aug. 15, all the children and their parents were invited to the church for a pizza dinner, entertainment with a video of the camp week, and time for Latino parish associate, Leo Reich, to talk to the parents. Around 200 children, parents, and counselors attended this final event of camp week.



Haw Branch UMC holds "Blessing of the Backpacks" community service

On Aug. 22, Haw Branch UMC in the New Bern District had a free, community-wide spaghetti supper followed by a "Blessing of the Backpacks" service of worship and blessings for the new school year. Lay speaker, Curtis Hildt, brought the message for the service. Various denominations and ethnic groups attended with 25 children receiving school supplies to fill their backpacks as well as a special blessing by Haw Branch pastor Betty Jo Rodgers.

Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

Experienced Writers Needed

At times, assignment writers are needed for the NCCC Advocate. Must be experienced with journalistic writing and AP Stylebook. Anyone interested should send samples of writing to Bill Norton, Advocate editor, bnorton@nccumc.org.

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UMM and DBOM partner to expand prison ministry

The General Commission on UMM Men has forged a partnership with DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries to bring DISCIPLE Bible study to prisons across the U.S.

Meeting in September, the 21-member board approved an agreement with DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries, Inc.(DBOM), a joint ministry of the NC Conference and Western NC Conference. The Rev. Mark Hicks serves as DBOM's executive director.

The mission of the ministry is "Making disciples through Bible study to bring God's grace to a hurting world," said Hicks.

Hicks has been leading DISCIPLE program in correctional settings since 1999, and he says the studies are transformational for both volunteers and prison participants.

"I was always excited by the possibility of transformation among the inmates," Hicks said, "but I'm equally excited by the transformation occurring in our volunteers, and as a result, our churches." Hicks has also created a program for juvenile offenders that is currently being used in every Youth Development Center in North Carolina.

"I was involved in a prison ministry weekend at a maximum security prison in Texas," said Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the commission. "That experience changed my whole perspective and perception of prisons and the need for our engagement in this vital ministry. I believe that Jesus' list of places of service (Matthew 25:31-46), is all inclusive and ongoing. If I give to a food pantry or clothes closet once, I don't think that fulfills Jesus' request; I'm not off the hook. I don't think we can pick one from that list that is the easiest or most comfortable for us. Jesus directs us to where the need is greatest and we should be obedient."

Inmates' responses

- ♦ "My DISCIPLE Bible study class represented love to me," said a North Carolina prison inmate. "It is a blessing for me to know that God loves me. In the group there was no inmate feeling. When we studied the word everybody had value. When you're sitting on the other side of the wall, you need all the encouragement you can get."
- ♦ "For the last five months I have been involved in the DISCIPLE program. My time could not have been spent any better doing anything else. This class has enabled me to deal with my circumstances better and find answers to live my life with peace and love."



- ♦ "I have come to know the Lord better, and am convinced that He is greater now than ever before. It is my prayer that the DISCIPLE course will continue to grow throughout the prison system."

Guidelines

Hicks offers the following guidelines for beginning the ministry:

1. DISCIPLE prison ministry requires careful planning and approval from both the local church and the agency sponsoring the ministry, as well as from the prison authorities where the studies will take place.
2. Prisons require volunteers to complete an application form and submit to a criminal background check prior to approval as a volunteer.
3. The scheduling of a time and place for the study, the recruitment of inmates for classes, and the ongoing supervision of prisoners will require the help and cooperation of correctional staff.
4. In prisons where there is a chaplain on staff, activities should be coordinated through this person. It is important to develop a relationship with the prison chaplain and to respect his or her authority as the person responsible for the spiritual needs of the inmate population.
5. In prison, the DISCIPLE program operates much as it does in the local church. However, be aware that it is a controlled environment. Respect those responsible for the study leaders' safety. There are times when class will be interrupted for security reasons or affected by other issues unique to correctional settings.
6. To be involved in prison ministry, all volunteers must agree to follow all training procedures, rules, and regulations mandated by the prison or the sponsoring church or agency.

Long-term commitment

Beyond these specific issues and suggestions, be aware that a DISCIPLE prison ministry will only be effective if the group has planned for the long term. The prison authorities—especially the chaplain—need



to trust that the sponsoring church or conference is making a continuing commitment. The initial plan should include which units of DISCIPLE will be offered after the first one, how soon after the first unit the volunteers will start the second, and who is committed to teaching not just the first unit, but the second and third units as well.

Recruiting the initial group of participants from the prison population will require laying some groundwork. If a church is already engaged in a mentoring or pen-pal ministry at the prison, then participants in those programs

can become part of the core group.

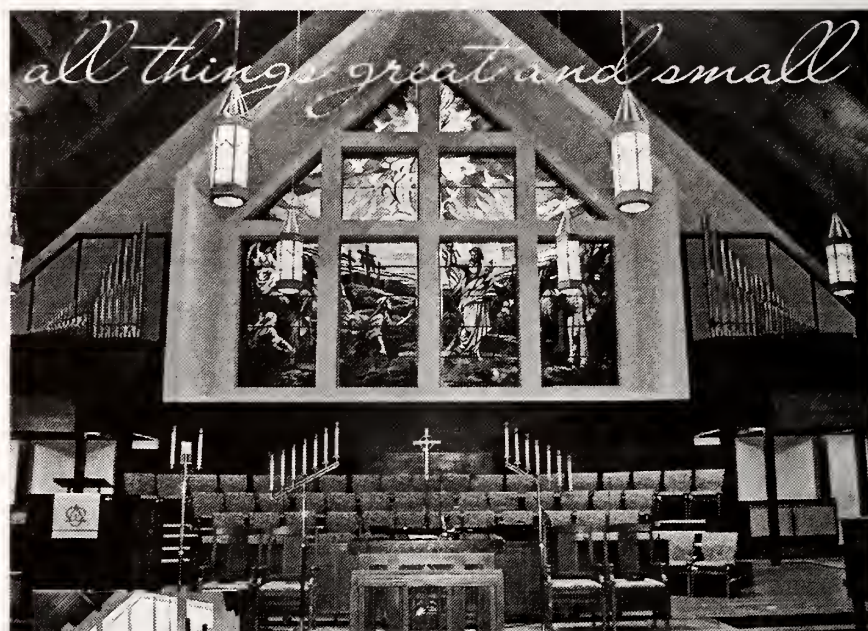
Barring that, look for a pastor in the area who regularly visits the prison, and ask his or her help in recruiting participants.

Materials and pilot projects

DISCIPLE Bible materials are available at Cokesbury bookstores (www.Cokesbury.com). In addition, Bishop Richard Wilke has provided a booklet of questions and activities for men based on DISCIPLE II; that study is available in the resource section of www.GCUMM.org (UM Men DISCIPLE Bible Supplement).

The North Carolina-based ministry and the commission are seeking \$5,000 for each pilot project in up to eight states.

For more information contact Hanke (ghank@gcumm.org) or Hicks (MCHicks@northstate.net).



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

UMW Annual Meeting	2
MU hosts Wesley Heritage Seminar	3
The Advance for Christ	7-9
December Bible Study	12
Unity in the Journey - Order of Deacon gathering	16

Mack McMillan remembered during Service of Death and Resurrection

By Bill Norton *

The life and ministry of the Rev. Samuel D. McMillan III was celebrated in a Service of Death and Resurrection on Oct. 28 in First United Methodist Church, Rocky Mount.

McMillan, 50, better known as "Mack," died early Monday morning, Oct. 25, of a blood clot. He was serving as Rocky Mount district superintendent and was in his parsonage at the time of his death.

Almost 700 people filled the sanctuary and two other rooms at First UMC for the service.

The NC Conference Appointive Cabinet, clergy of the Rocky Mount District, the Rocky Mount District Board of Laity and Committee on Superintendency served as honorary pall bearers.

In the front of the church altar area was a table with three roses, one from his wife, Paige, and one each from his daughter and son, Hannah and Duncan, and an urn of ashes.

Also on the table and on tables in other areas

of the church were McMillan's stoles, the outward sign of the clergy order dedicated to Word, Sacrament and Order in the life of the church.

On the table with the roses and urn was the stole McMillan received when he became the Rocky Mount District superintendent, the one on the Communion Table was from his

ordination, and stoles on display in overflow rooms represented his various appointments.

"Mack has experienced a crowning event of life, entering into the eternal kingdom," said NC Conference Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. during the sermon.

Following the reading selected verses from John 14, Bishop Gwinn said "I believe God wants to take our hands, if you please, and offer us comfort, truth, insight, and strength as he reminds us that death is not a period but only a comma in the story of life."

"Do not grieve today for Mack. Mack has dropped anchor in the calm depths of God's loving presence and whatever Heaven is it is to be with Jesus," he said.

Looking at the family he said "do not let yourself be alarmed or disquieted as you start walking these days without Mack. God will take care of you."

Also participating in the service were Bishop Paul L. Leeland, bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference



The Rev. Mack McMillan

and previously a Cabinet colleague of McMillan; the Rev. Jonathan E. Strother, Raleigh District superintendent and a Cabinet colleague; the Rev. Robert E. Bergland, senior pastor of First UMC in Rocky Mount and a family friend; and Colonel Harrison Smith (US Air Force retired), McMillan's brother-in-law, fraternity brother, and friend for over 30 years.

"We come here today to give thanks from the depths of our souls for the life of Mack McMillan who touched each of us in a way that is rare in this world," said Rev. Strother. "I know Mack loved me, warts and all."

"Mack understood that our life in Christ is not a destination but a pilgrimage and he embraced that journey which is characterized with a friendship with Jesus totally, wholly with the good and the bad," he said.

"United Methodist Youth Minis-

See "McMillan remembered," page 5



Personal stoles representing Mack McMillan's ministry were on display during the service. The stole above was presented to McMillan when he became Rocky Mount District superintendent. Displayed with the stole and urn were three white roses from his family.

Annual Duke Day transformed into a discipleship outreach event for United Methodist Men

Instead of being just a day of family fun, the Conference United Methodist Men Duke Day this year became a discipleship event where youth accepted Christ as their personal Savior and most of the participants had their first experience at a college football game.

The UMM gathering at Duke this year, called "Share the Game, Share your Faith," was an emphasis by the men to reach out to local youth groups for a time of worship, fellowship and to attend the Duke vs. Army football game on Sept. 25.

At the event last year, Bill Jones, 82 of Cary, brought two children who had never received communion or attended a college football game.

"Not only did Bill touch the lives of those two children, he touched the lives of many more during the event as his thoughtful actions prompted a change in focus of the UMM Duke Day from an enjoyable family event to a more Christ-centered event for youth of different ages," said Tom Starnes, conference UMM president.

With this emphasis change, attendance moved from a previous high

attendance of 120 to 370 this year.

The day began at Asbury UMC in Durham with worship. Chad Goss, a nationally-known youth motivational speaker, lay speaker, and former wide receiver for the Alabama Crimson Tide, delivered the message.

He talked about the death of his mother when he was nine years old, going to live with his grandparents, the death of his grandfather and going to live with his aunt. In high school, he was the quarterback of a

See "UMM Duke Day," page 5



Officers elected for 2011 were (L-R) LaNella Smith, nominations chair; Ann Davis, president; Sandra Croom, secretary; Daisy Dye, nominations; Louise Mitchell, nominations; Ceil Matthews, communications; Melba McCallum, membership, nurture and outreach; Sonja Tilley, education and interpretation; Joyce Herring, treasurer; Theresa Hodges, vice president; JoAnn Stanford, spiritual growth; JoAnn Barbour, social action; Susan Rayle, nominations; and Stephanie Houze, 39 & under representative. Not present when the photo was taken were Ann Krieger, secretary of program resources; and Susan Eudy, Kendall McDougald, and Ginny Crocker, nominations.

United Methodist Women hold annual meeting

The North Carolina Conference of United Methodist Women met at Fayetteville University on Oct. 16. Conference President, Ann Davis convened the 38th annual meeting with a special welcome to the approximately 500 registered attendees.

The New Bern District served as the event host.

The 2009-2012 Quadrennial theme is "In God's Mission, We are sent out to Carry."

The business session opened with the awarding of the 2009 Book of Reports to Steve Taylor, Conference Outreach Ministries team coordinator. Steve is a lifelong supporter of United Methodist Women and has taught for nine years in the UMW School of Christian Mission.

Melba McCallum, Conference Education & Interpretation coordinator, led the Candle Burning

ceremony along with the 12 District Education and Interpretation coordinators. The cost for one minute was \$36.00.

Each district lit a candle that represented the amount of dollars collected and the number of hours that each candle burned in honor or in memory of a special love one. The total amount collected was \$44,706.19, representing 20 hours, 41 minutes and 50 seconds.

Martha Caves, member of the Scholarship Committee, reported that six women received scholarships. Four women will attend Methodist University and two will attend Duke Divinity School. The total amount awarded was \$10,000.

The following mission accomplishments were celebrated: The Reading Banner was presented to the Raleigh District. The Fayetteville District was the recipient of the Study Jewel.



Ann Davis, UMW president, left, thanked Sandra Creech Mendell for her service as UMW treasurer.

Unidos por Cristo chartered a Hispanic unit in the Greenville District.

Agape United Methodist Church chartered a Korean unit in the Raleigh District, and Singletary United Methodist Church organized a new unit in the Wilmington District.

In recognition of the Mission Today program 17 local units received Gold Certificates for their completion of 20 out of 21 possible items required to achieve the gold status. Eleven women presented their local unit's stories telling how they carry God's mission into the world.

Jin Lee, a member of Agape UMC, was appointed language coordinator for United Methodist Women. Jin will encourage and nurture women of all languages.

The 2011 budget was presented by Sandra Mendell, conference treasurer. It was approved by the voting body. The Pledge to Mission for 2011 is \$440,000.00. These funds are generated from approximately 19,228 faithful local unit members.

Jane Johnson, former conference UMW president installed the 2011 slate of conference officers: President-Ann Davis; Vice President-Theresa Hodges; Secretary-Sandra Croom; Treasurer-Joyce Herring; Social Action Coordinator-JoAnn Barbour; Education and Interpretation-Sonja Tilley; Member-

ship, Nurture and Outreach-Melba McCallum; Spiritual Growth-JoAnn Stanford; Chairperson of Nominations-LaNella Smith; Communications Coordinator-Ceil Matthews; Secretary of Program Resources-Ann Krieger; 39 & Under Representative-Stephanie Houze; Committee on Nominations-Susan Eudy, Susan Rayle, Daisy Dye, Kendall McDougald, Louise Mitchell and Ginny Crocker.

JoAnn Stanford, spiritual growth coordinator led the Remembrance Service. Districts recognized each deceased UMW member in 2010.

The youth of Pine Valley United Methodist Church of Wilmington performed a black light hand mime as an interlude to the worship service.

The program concluded with a Service of Worship. Dr. Carolyn Roy, pastor of Plank Chapel UMC in Kittrell, preached the sermon entitled "Carriers." The love offering was \$1127.65. Bishop Al Gwinn led the Communion Service.

Ann Davis closed the meeting with the challenge for everyone to be God's servants by putting their faith, hope and love into action. The congregation sang the chorus of "Let's go Fly a Kite."



Steve Taylor (right), conference staff, was awarded the 2009 Book of Reports for his support of UMW and teaching for nine years at the School of Christian Mission. Sitting with Taylor is his wife, Sheryl.



Glow, a Black Light Hand Mime Youth Group from Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington performed during the UMW Annual Meeting.

Men's discipleship dinner is kick-off to 2011 "No Man Left Behind NC" event

Pastors and men's leaders throughout the North Carolina Conference are encouraged to attend a dinner on Tuesday, Dec. 7 with Patrick Morley, founder of Man in the Mirror, to discuss men's discipleship and one model that has been effective in churches across the U.S.

Man in the Mirror is a discipling ministry to encourage and inspire men to change their life in Christ. The dinner is a kick-off for "No Man Left Behind North Carolina," a 2 ½ day seminar of learning, planning, and fellowship to be held at the MERCI Center in Goldsboro on April 7-9.

Participants at the December event will meet and brainstorm with other men's group leaders, learn what has been successful at churches doing discipleship for men, receive an overview of the No Man Left Behind model, get to know Patrick Morley, and prepare to promote the April event.

The dinner, beginning at 6:30 p.m., will be held in the Pryor-Bradford Christian Ministry Center at Millbrook UMC, 1712 E. Millbrook Road, Raleigh. The charge for the dinner will be \$10, payable at the door. To make a reservation for Dec. 7, e-mail Pam Adkins at pamadkins@maninthemirror.org or call 1-800-929-2536, ext. 110.

Video streaming of the event is being planned for men who cannot attend. Details will be on NCCUMC.ORG at least a week prior to the gathering.

Methodist University hosts Wesley Heritage Seminar

By Adriana Wilson *

Methodist University will host a Wesley Heritage Seminar Nov. 12-13, in the Medical Lecture Hall, the newest addition of the Physician Assistant (PA) Program Complex on the university campus.

The seminar will include a screening of the movie, "Wesley," panel discussions, and a celebration of the Moravian Love Feast. The cost for attending the screening and panel discussion on either day is \$5 and all events are open to the public.

Following the screening Friday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m., will be a question and answer period with producer, the Rev. John Jackman, and actor Burgess Jenkins.

Saturday's events include a matinee of the full length movie at 2 p.m., followed by a panel presentation and discussion. Panelists include Jackman and Jenkins as well as Dr. M. Elton Hendricks, Methodist University president; the Rev. Phil Bauguess, Moravian pastor; and Dr. Gayle C. Felton. Dr. Mark Wethington, president of the Wesley Foundation, will moderate.

The seminar concludes with the celebration of a Moravian Love Feast led by Bauguess.

"Wesley" is a film based closely on the actual events of the life of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. The film captures the tragedy of Wesley's love life, as well as the controversy that surrounded

his ministry.

"Many religious leaders of history aren't really good movie material because their lives are filled with reading, contemplation, and lots of preaching," Jackman says. "Wesley's story is filled with conflict and action... And the conflict is complex since a great deal of it is with himself."

The cast includes June Lockhart, Kevin McCarthy, R. Keith Harris, Carrie Anne Hunt, and Jenkins, as John Wesley. Jenkins's credits include "Remember the Titans," "The Reaping," and hit television shows such as "One Tree Hill" and "Army Wives."

Jackman is an award-winning director and author who works include the documentary "After the War: Rebuilding Nicaragua." His broadcast credits include ABC, The Hallmark Channel, The History Channel, and public television stations.

He has served on the Board of Directors of the Piedmont Triad Film Commission and as chair of the Division of Communications.

Jackman is an ordained pastor in the Moravian Church and currently serves as the senior pastor of Trinity Moravian Church in Winston-Salem.

For more information or reservations, contact Donna Wilson, director of ministry events, at (910) 630-7157 or e-mail dlwilson@methodist.edu.

* Adriana Wilson is a senior at Methodist University majoring in mass communications. Wilson is an editorial assistant in the Office of University Relations.

NCC Open House set for Dec. 4

As members of the NC Conference give thanks for the gift of a beautiful new facility, an open house for the United Methodist Building is planned for Saturday, Dec. 4 from 1:00-4:00 pm. All members of the conference, both clergy and lay, are welcome to attend and share in celebrating the new headquarters.

In addition to touring the building, participants are invited to share in God's abundance in two ways: through registering for a national bone marrow donor database and by bringing non-perishable food for a food drive.

In giving thanks for blessings of good health, the "Be The Match" drive will allow participants to register with the National Marrow Donor Program and be listed in a database of potential bone marrow donors for individuals who are battling serious health challenges such as leukemia. In addition to registering for the database, there will be opportunities for registering with the program for potential bone marrow matching and also for individuals to give financially to support the program costs for finding potential donors and matching them with someone in need. To find out more about the program, visit the National Marrow Donor Program website at <http://www.marrow.org/>.

Giving thanks for blessings of nourishment, a food drive will support the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. Please bring non-perishable food donations for distribution to those in need. A list of the most needed items by the Food Bank is available on their website at <http://content.foodbankcenc.org/getinvolved/mostneededitems.pdf>.

The new NC Conference headquarters are located at 700 Waterfield Ridge Place in Garner. A map and link to directions to the UM Building are available online at <http://nccumc.org/contact/>. For questions, call 800-849-4433.

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\$2 million in technology upgrades coming to MU campus via grant

By Maria Sikoryak-Robins *

Methodist University in Fayetteville has been awarded a Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education totaling \$2 million.

For five years, the university will receive \$400,000 each year for technology upgrades on the campus.

"Technology is an integral part of the modern world," said Dr. Elton Hendricks, president of Methodist University.

"A good 21st century education has to help students feel not only comfortable with, but also to use the evolving technology creatively. This competitive grant from the Department of Education will enable Methodist University students to achieve these goals," said Hendricks.

"I am thrilled to learn that Methodist has received a five-year, \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education—effective immediately—to upgrade technology on campus," said Dr. Delmas Crisp, vice president for academic affairs and dean of Methodist University.

According to Dr. Crisp, this grant will help those within Methodist University create a *culture of excellence* through three inter-related initiatives:

1. The integration of student data management technology that will engage faculty

and staff across divisional and departmental lines and with students for essential, timely academic interventions;

2. The addition of instructional technology that will *enrich* the learning experience for all students; and
3. The incorporation of end-user technology that will *empower* students to take control of their learning outcomes and give faculty and staff a robust tool to continue enhancing academic programs and student services.

"We plan to integrate state-of-the-art technology in our classrooms and within our curriculum," said Dr. Don Lassiter, vice president for planning and evaluation, and dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

"One curriculum that will serve as a model of this new technology integration is the new Nursing Program," he said.

Dr. Lassiter, who will direct the Title III project, added that the initiatives for the next five years flow directly from goals set forth in the University's Strategic Plan and that University personnel will be trained on the use of the new tools.

* Maria Sikoryak-Robins is director of communications and publications at Methodist University.

University experiences record enrollment

Methodist University has experienced a significant growth this fall in its new-student, day program, graduate, and overall enrollments. "This is the first time in the history of Methodist University that we have enrolled over 500 freshmen," said Rick Lowe, vice-president for Enrollment Services. "Our freshman class of 530 students comes to MU from 31 states and 21 nations. This is also our largest enrollment ever from the Cape Fear Region," said Lowe. As a result of its explosive residential growth, Methodist University has contracted off-campus housing to accommodate students. A decision about expanding the residential housing options on campus will likely be made in the near future.



The second Asbury Homes was opened in Pembroke in late September. Another home is located in Tabor City. (Photo by Gary Lacklear)

Asbury Homes opens new facility in Pembroke

By Carol Goehring *

The gracious entry to the home was filled with music. The sweet scent of brownies and cupcakes suggested a celebration was about to begin. The opening of the second Asbury Home was held Sept. 25 in Pembroke. The spacious and beautifully appointed house can accommodate up to six residents with cognitive and mental challenges, and a staff member. Currently, two staff members rotate seven days on duty and seven off.

Members of the Board of Directors of the Asbury Homes worked for 11 years to design and oversee the building of the new facility. The opening was indeed a celebration of their accomplishment and an opportunity to welcome members of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church to see the home.

The Rev. Phil Brown, executive director of Asbury Homes, welcomed guests and introduced staff and board members present. He also recognized the residents and their families.

The mother of one of the residents commented that this facility is a blessing to her and her special needs child. She said she appreciates having her son close by, in a family atmosphere. The fact that it is a faith-based home and provides activities for residents is an added value.

The residents are proud of their new home, and some are growing in their independence, as they are required to assist in the care of the home. Each resident has his or her own room and they share common areas, such as, the kitchen, dining area and the living room.

Asbury Homes, Inc., is a non-profit agency, one of the institutions of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, related to the Conference by faith and mission. The agency also has a home in Tabor City.

Financial support for the homes comes through donations from individuals and congregations, as well as fees for services for the residents. Donations may be directed to: Asbury Homes, PO Box 1059, Pembroke, NC 28372.

* The Rev. Carol Goehring is executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

McMillan remembered during Service of Death and Resurrection From page 1

try touched Mack and shaped him in ways we will never fully know and understand," said Rev. Bergland.

"In 1978, when there was a foot washing service, Mack went down and the Lord spoke to him in a way where he began to discern that the call and claim on his life, that began with baptism, was a call to be a pastor," he said.

Noting that McMillan had a goal of working with the Secret Service, Bergland said "I know of no other pastor in the North Carolina Conference that had the level of security

clearance that Mack McMillan had."

Bergland said McMillan's wife, Paige, when describing her husband, referred to the words of love spoken in the movie "On Golden Pond" by Katharine Hepburn's character of Henry Fonda's character. "He was my knight in shining armor, my prince," she said.

"Mack was a complete organ donor," Bergland said. "While his life went into a greater glory Monday morning, that night his heart was transplanted to provide life to another person."

Smith, McMillan's brother-in-law, said he was a "leader in every way and touched thousands throughout his life. He was a boy's man, a man's man, a family man, and the Lord's man."

"As a boy's man, Mack loved children. He coached sports and urged others to do so. He loved playing with all the children in the family," Smith said. "When Mack was playing with the boys in the ocean, my daughter described it as Mack tossing them around like rag dolls."

"Mack could be intimidating, especially if you did not know him. As a

man's man, Mack was a catcher in baseball, played offensive and defensive line in football, wrestled heavy-weight division in high school and could bench press over 300 pounds. He was tough as nails," Smith said.

Describing McMillan as a family man, Smith said "Among Mack's priorities was his greatest love for his family. He was a tough dad. His children are some of the most incredible, mature young people in this world today."

After graduation from UNC-Chapel Hill, McMillan considered law school, Secret Service, the FBI and other occupations before becoming an NC driver's license examiner, Smith said. "Mack felt the Lord's call and entered divinity school at Duke. He was a champion for Christ – the Lord's man."

"Though we mourn his loss today, may the memory of his character, his gentle spirit, and his bigger-than-life smile be with us always," Smith said.

Bishop Leeland delivered the Prayer of Commendation and Benediction.

McMillan was a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University Divinity School.

His appointments included associate at First UMC-Roanoke Rapids, Mt. Carmel-Pikeville, Mt. Zion-Raleigh District, Riverside-Elizabeth City, New Beginnings-Youngsville, Saint Luke-Laurinburg, and Rocky Mount District Superintendent.

He was preceded in death by his father, the Rev. Samuel Duncan McMillan, Jr. who was a pastor in the Conference and a district superintendent.

Mack is survived by his wife, Paige Lancaster McMillan of the home; son, Samuel Duncan McMillan IV of the home; daughter, Hannah Elizabeth McMillan of the home; mother, Frances B. McMillan of Raleigh; two sisters, Elizabeth McMillan Smith and husband, Harrison, of Carolina Beach, and Sara McMillan Perkinson and husband, Cary, of Garner; and in-laws, Tryon and Anne Lancaster of Fayetteville; sister-in-law, Sarah Lancaster of Wake Forest; brothers-in-law, Del Lancaster of Wake Forest and Jamie Lancaster and wife, Kendra, of Fayetteville; and nieces and nephews, Cameron, Forest, Kenneth, Lane, Jay and Jack.

Memorials may be made to the McMillan Scholarship Fund, 273 Sunset Avenue, Rocky Mount, NC 27803.

** Bill Norton is editor of the NC Conference Christian Advocate.*

UMM Duke Day becomes discipleship event from page 1

championship team, suffered a knee injury and at only 5'9" and at 165 pounds, received no college football offers.

As a student at the University of Alabama, he became a "walk-on" member of the football team. Prior to his junior year, he received a full football scholarship.

He met his wife, a member of the basketball team at Alabama. They married between their junior and senior years there. Today, they have four children.

Goss credits where he is today to his Savior, Jesus Christ, and to the people in his life who helped him as a child and a youth.

During his altar call at Asbury, eight youth accepted Christ as their personal Savior. When the call was extended to adults, four men went to the front of the church and accepted Christ.

Timmy, one of the youth attending his first college game during the event, interpreted the speaker's life as meaning that "your problems don't make you who you are but what you do about them does."



Chad Goss, the UMM Duke Day speaker, is shown raising his hands as he leads the gathering at Asbury UMC in the Lord's Prayer.

From the church, the group gathered at the top of the Duke stadium and walked in single file down an aisle, passing all the seats and onto the track surrounding the football field. On the track, they passed the UMM banner displayed in the North

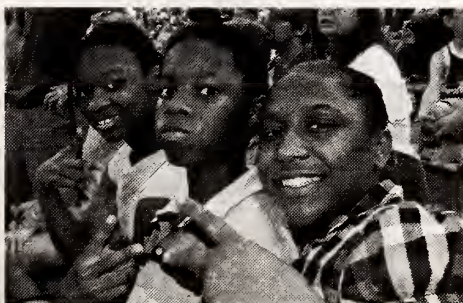
end zone before being greeted by the Duke Blue Devil Mascot and then going to their seats.

"Most of us, if not all, have never been on a college campus before, certainly not one like Duke," said a father with his son, two nephews and eight other boys with the Millbrook UMM.

"We were walking to the game and we passed 'K-Ville.' My son and all the boys knew what this place was, just like on TV. My son turned around to me and said, 'Dad, I can play basketball here.'" I replied, "you sure can son if you keep your grades up."

"Everyone enjoyed using their personalized \$5 UMM food voucher card prepared by the Duke staff. After the game, several youth and adults remained for a personalized tour of the hallowed Cameron facility. Needless to say, many of the youth and maybe even some of the adults were awe-stricken," said Starnes.

Before leaving the campus, some of the UMM started discussing plans for next year's event.



The UMM Duke Day event this year moved from an enjoyable family gathering to a more Christ-centered get together for 370 youth of all ages. The groups varied in size from a few to larger numbers. Plans are being discussed for next year's event.



Annual Conference members asked to make downtown hotel reservations now for 2011 meeting in Raleigh

The 2010 Annual Conference voted to convene the 2011 conference in Raleigh at the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC).

Among the three proposals before the 2010 Conference, the Raleigh proposal contained some incentives that could cut the actual meeting costs.

In Raleigh, the downtown merchants and hotels have a group called the Raleigh Development Fund (RDF), through which incentives are offered to encourage large meetings downtown.

As a part of the contract, the RCC set the Conference meeting room charges at \$20,200. The RDF offered to pay these charges if the Conference agreed to a multi-year contract and used at least 500 hotel rooms in the downtown area for at least one night during the conference.

The Annual Conference will probably meet June 15-18, Wed.-Sat., but the number of meeting days has not been finalized.

Annual Conference members are being encouraged to reserve a room at the following downtown hotels: Marriott Raleigh City Center, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, and Clarion Hotel State Capital.

The Marriott is adjacent to the Convention Center, the Sheraton is across the street, and the Clarion, which is near Edenton Street UMC, is about five blocks from the Center.

Arrangements have been made for 200 rooms and a special rate of \$109 plus tax per night at both the Marriott and Sheraton and 100 rooms at \$89 plus tax per night at the Clarion.

"These arrangements provide us with the 500 rooms, at special rates, to meet the contract housing requirements, along with a multi-year agreement, to receive the \$20,200 incentive payment," said the Rev. Jerry Bryan, conference secretary.

"There are other hotels in the Raleigh area, but we are trying to get as many of our folks in the downtown area as possible. The merchants and

Hotel Registration Information

When calling the hotel to make a reservation at any of these hotels, ask for The United Methodist Church group rate.

Marriott Raleigh City Center - Make reservation by May 14, 2011

(919) 833-1120; Rate: \$109.00 + tax

Online: Go to the link below and adjust the dates accordingly. This will automatically provide the group rate of \$109. <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/rdumc-raleigh-marriott-city-center> OR Phone: 866-260-1270 and refer to "The United Methodist Church" group in June 2011 or refer to the 3-letter code "UMC".

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel - Make reservation by May 16, 2011

(919) 834-9900; Rate: \$109.00 + tax

Clarion Hotel State Capital - Make reservation by May 11, 2011

(919) 832-0501; Rate: \$89.00 + tax

hotels in the downtown area are the ones funding the RDA, and of course, they want as much of our business downtown as possible," Bryan said.

"It is possible for anyone staying at one of the three designated hotels to park their car the first day of conference and not use it again until the end of conference. The Raleigh R Bus Line, which is free, circulates in the

downtown area on a 15 minute cycle. One of the pickup sites is near the Clarion," Bryan said. "A number of restaurants are within walking distance from the Convention Center."

Conference members are encouraged to make reservations at one of the three downtown hotels as soon as possible. See chart above for specific registration information.

CLASSIFIEDS

COME TO THE QUIET COUNTRY, Albemarle, NC. House for sale, only 10 mins from 2 golf courses, Lake Tillery, and Morrow Mtn State Park. Watch deer from your back porch, hear the whip-poor-wills and owls. 3 BR, 2BA, 1550 sq. ft. brick on 3 +/- wooded acres. Breakfast room and laundry room off kitchen. Den, dining room, fireplace and full basement. For more information, please email antiquefreak1@aol.com or call 704-982-5248.

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska - 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

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United Methodist students struggling as scholarship funds decline; UM Student Day offering is Nov. 28

By Vicki Brown *

Nearly 1,000 United Methodists who qualified for a scholarship this year walked away empty-handed, and more students are expected to be disappointed in 2011 unless giving to scholarships increases dramatically.

A number of factors have contributed to the problem, said James Harding, interim executive director of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Office of Loans and Scholarships.

"First, the applications skyrocketed after we began accepting applications online in 2009," Harding said. "At the same time, investment earnings were down due to the poor economy, even as giving to World Communion



Sunday, United Methodist Student Day, and Native American Ministries Sunday continues to decline."

Money for UM scholarships and

loans comes from a variety of funding sources - donations to Special Sundays with offerings, earnings on investments of gifts from wills and annuities, and repayments and interest on student loans.

"We turned down 954 qualified United Methodist students in 2010 simply because we didn't have enough money," Harding said. In 2010, 2,411 students received scholarships totaling \$3.3 million.

"Support for United Methodist Student Day is crucial if we are to honor the church's commitment to educating a new generation of Christian leaders," Harding said.

Student Day is observed this year on Nov. 28 (or any other day a church chooses). And, anyone can give online at anytime at www.umcsgiving.org/umstudentday.

Ninety percent of Student Day collections go to the United Methodist scholarship programs, while 10 percent is for student loans. Each United Methodist-related college gets money from the offering for scholarships, and participating annual conferences get 10% of Student Day receipts to award to their own merit scholars.

Observing Student Day

Churches are encouraged to observe Student Day on Nov. 28 or any other day that this is convenient for the church. In addition, individuals can now contribute online with a credit card at any time at www.umcsgiving.org/umstudentday, where free promotional resources, video presentations, and worship resources can also be ordered. Or call United Methodist Communications at 888-346-3862 to order resources.

Links to give online for all three Special Sundays with Offerings in support of scholarships can be found at www.gbhem.org/loansandscholarships/givenow. To learn more about loans and scholarships, visit www.gbhem.org/loansandscholarships.

* Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.



The Advance

Advancing hope in Christ's name

The Advance is an official program of The United Methodist Church for voluntary, designated, second-mile giving. Through The Advance, United Methodist annual conferences, districts, local churches, organizations and individuals may choose to support particular, approved mission programs or mission personnel with their financial gifts.

Those who make gifts to the Advance have the assurance that 100% of all Advance giving goes to the chosen mission project or ministry.

Second-mile giving is contributions given after a congregation has met its "first-mile" responsibility to support The United Methodist Church's missions and ministries through World Service and other apportioned funds. This "second-mile" giving, beyond our apportioned remittance, is an outward sign of an inward love for Christ and the church.

Since the founding of The Advance in 1948, over three million gifts totaling over \$1.2 billion dollars have supported thousands of projects and ministries around the world to help them grow and improve their capacity to serve their communities.

The Advance provides a channel of giving to projects in 100 countries around the globe. Advance projects not only work to alleviate suffering and respond to disasters, but also work to address the root causes of poverty and injustice, and make long-lasting improvements to the quality of life through development and education. Moreover, The Advance not only seeks to improve the physical quality of life, but also the spiritual and religious quality of life by sharing the love of Jesus Christ through evangelism and church growth.

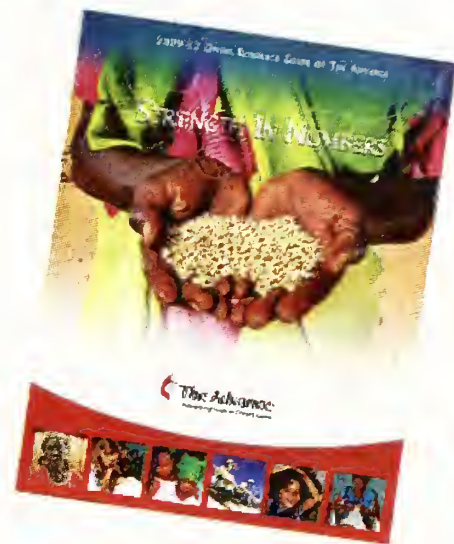
Gifts—large and small—have built churches, dug wells, educated leaders, equipped schools and hospitals, fed, clothed and vaccinated children, planted trees, supported missionaries, rescued victims of wars and natural disasters, and shared God's love.

To all of the people across the world who share in this partnership, the mission work of The Advance is like living water. It refreshes, renews, blesses, gives life and gives hope. It transforms the world, causing even a desert to turn green with life.

May God bless the work done as United Methodists, together, walking the second mile.

Why Should Gifts Be Made Through The Advance?

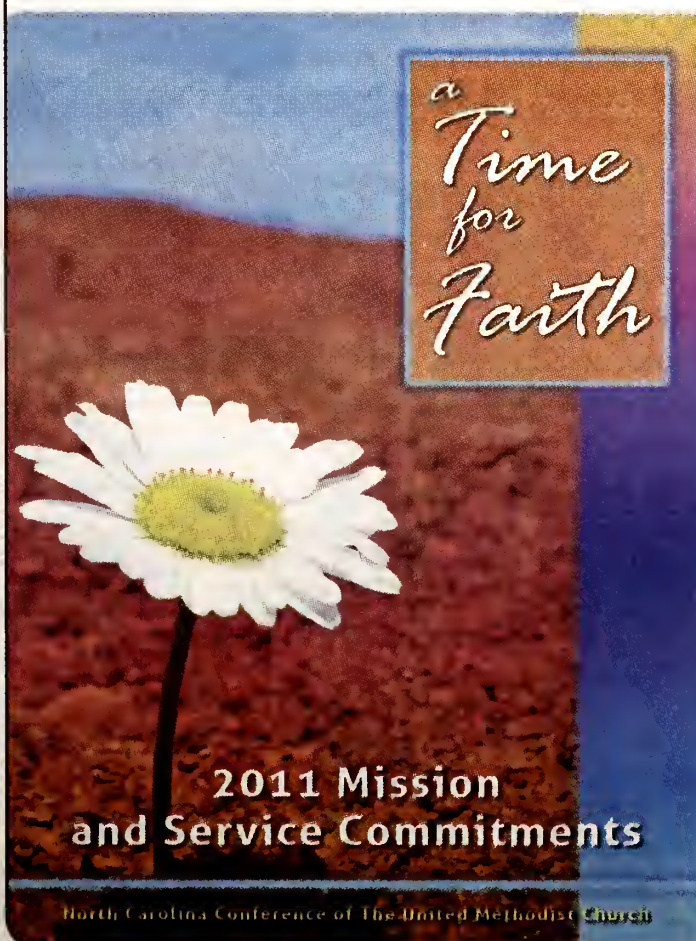
- ✓ The Advance is unique. 100% of each gift reaches its intended ministry. Administrative costs are paid for by the apportionments of United Methodist churches.
- ✓ Donors choose what mission or ministry they want to support.
- ✓ All Advance ministries are related to annual conferences, central conferences, partner churches or interfaith organizations; screened by the Board of Global Ministries; and authorized by The Advance Committee.



To extend God's love in concrete and visible ways, The Methodist Church launched an initiative led by the bishops.

"Advance," said Bishop T. Otto Nall, "is our kind of word—moving, stirring, commanding, growing, expanding, inspiring. It summons us...from where we are, to where we know we ought to be."

2011 Mission and Service Commitments



Enclosed with this edition of the NCCC Advocate is the 2010 Mission and Service Commitments booklet.

This annual publication includes detail on the North Carolina Conference ministry budget, information and forms for Rainbow Covenant churches, and stewardship resources from the Media Center.

The booklet is also available for download from the conference Communications Office webpage at <http://nccumc.org/communications/publications/>.

Additional printed copies may be requested from District Superintendents or by calling the conference Communications Office at 1-800-849-4433.

Understanding the Advance for Christ *continued from page 7*

- ✓ The Advance tracks each gift with a large network of Global Ministries staff and ensures that gifts reach their intended recipients. This protects from corruption and misallocation of funds, which can occur when churches give overseas without these structures in place.

How Are Advance Projects Selected?

- ♦ New Advance guidelines require that each project originates within its own country or region. Additionally, each Advance project reflects needs and priorities of the local area.
- ♦ Mission projects submit applications to The Advance office. Program Areas of Global Ministries screen, evaluate and provide administration for Advance projects. These Program Areas include: Community and Institutional Ministries, Evangelization and Church Growth, Mission Contexts and Relationships, Mission Personnel, and United Methodist Committee on Relief.
- ♦ The Cabinet of Global Ministries reviews all applications approved by the program areas, and The Advance Committee reviews applications to determine whether they meet Advance project approval criteria.

How Do Projects Get Funded?

- ♦ Advance funding is not guaranteed. The Advance is a voluntary channel for financial giving. Therefore, the actual amount of gifts a project receives is solely dependent upon donor gifts.
- ♦ Donor gifts are administered to the projects by the Global Ministries program areas. These departments are responsible for communicating with projects, releasing gifts to projects, and monitoring expenditures of gifts.
- ♦ 100% of every gift through The Advance reaches its intended mission or ministry.

Why Give Through The Advance Instead of Sending Money Directly?

- ♦ Giving through The Advance enables United Methodists to partner with one another in mission and ministry around the world, while churches and annual conferences receive Advance credit by having their gifts included in each year's total giving by the Annual Conference.

- ♦ Acknowledgement of Advance giving enables the church to tell the story of what United Methodists are doing to advance hope in Jesus' name.

- ♦ Using existing United Methodist channels of giving promotes stewardship and connection.

Giving Through The Advance

- ♦ The Advance seeks to have the highest level of accountability, integrity and transparency. The General Board of Global Ministries has a system of accountability in place to ensure all gifts given through The Advance reach the intended mission or ministry.
- ♦ Area financial persons are present in each country or region. They receive and distribute gifts, and Global Ministries conducts audits to ensure the appropriate use of funds.
- ♦ Using wire transfers removes many of the risks faced when mailing or carrying funds to projects directly.
- ♦ Gifts can be tracked to the penny and to the date.
- ♦ The Advance requires an annual report from each project to help foster accountability, increase promotion, and communicate with project partners throughout the world.
- ♦ Global Ministries receives and processes all gifts, which are made available for disbursement and automatically wired to the project director or area financial person in the region once every month. The project receives 100 percent of the gift.
- ♦ A tax-deductible gift may be given through several different avenues: by church offering, online, by phone, or by mail. Online or telephone giving expedites the process and still enables churches and conferences to receive Advance credit.
 - ✓ By Church Offering: Make checks payable to the local church. Write the name of the ministry and the Advance code number on the check's memo line.
 - ✓ Online Giving: www.givetomission.org
 - ✓ Phone: Toll-free hotline to Global Ministries: 1-888-252-6174
 - ✓ Mail to: Advance GCFA, P.O. Box 9068, GPO, New York, NY 10087-9068. Be sure to include the Advance number on the check's memo line.

Are Updates Available on Specific Project?

- ♦ Check the web site, contact The Advance staff or visit a project through UMVIM. Through visits, newsletters, email and other forms of correspondence, Global Ministries is constantly collecting information about project partners. Projects are required to send yearly updates to The Advance. Content from these updates is used in Global Ministries' publications such as the web site, press releases, newsletters, email and New World Outlook magazine.

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Advance projects address many needs

Development and Education

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Peace and Justice Ministries

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Rainbow Covenant: Local Churches Touching Lives

To raise awareness of giving to The Advance, the NC Conference encourages churches to be a Rainbow Covenant Church. To do so, a local church needs to meet the "first mile" by paying in full apportionments as set by Annual Conference. This includes the World Service apportionment which undergirds all mission programs of The United Methodist Church — including Advance projects.

Each local church is then asked to support at least one project in each of the five lanes of the Rainbow Covenant. Each lane reminds the local church that it has touched persons with the love of God in its own community, in the broader areas of the Conference, on a national level, and throughout the world.

For 2011, the lanes have been slightly reorganized so that churches can better connect persons in mission and the projects with which they are involved. Review the Mission & Service Commitment booklet for more information (see page 7). The lanes are:

- † Lane One: Persons in Mission *
- † Lane Two: Conference Advances
- † Lane Three: National Missions
- † Lane Four: World Missions
- † Lane Five: UMCOR

A Hallelujah Moment: The Advance at Work in Liberia

Baby Godwin and the Miracle of the Moringa Tree

By Mozart Adevu *

Seven-month-old Baby Godwin lay motionless in the smoky cottage kitchen of his mother, Oretha, in the village of Duo. The entire village, including Oretha and her husband, Emmanuel, believed that Godwin was under the spell of witchcraft and couldn't live. They had given up on him.

Duo is about a 20-minute walk from the Camphor Mission where I was conducting training on the production and utilization of the Moringa tree. I had gone to Duo on a visit to promote UMCOR's Sustainable Agriculture and Development program when I came across Baby Godwin.

I could see that Godwin was terribly malnourished. I suggested to Oretha that she try feeding him Moringa-enriched food. I gave her some Moringa powder and demonstrated how to add it to the family's food, especially that of Baby Godwin. Oretha used Moringa faithfully and when I returned to visit again after a few months, Godwin looked very healthy and had even been nicknamed "Moringa baby."

This once unknown tree has now become known as "the tree of life" because of its excellent source of nutrition and energy. With regular

consumption, it helps strengthen the immune system and holds great promise for HIV-ravaged and malnourished populations in Africa.

As a result of Godwin's miraculous recovery, the villages around Duo are clamoring for the Moringa seeds and have whole-heartedly become involved in their production.

Godwin's parents now understand that their son was malnourished. Thankful to God, Oretha and Emmanuel have become leading crusaders, telling others about Moringa's nutritional benefits and its miraculous nature.

* Mozart Adevu, one of a number of missionaries recommended for support by the NC Conference Missions Committee, is a Global Ministries missionary serving as the Africa Regional Coordinator for the sustainable Agriculture and Development Program for UMCOR. He focuses on training farmers in Liberia. He currently serves as Chair of the Moringa Association of Ghana which promotes the nutritional properties of Moringa and has spearheaded the development of the first-ever standards on the production and processing of Moringa.



A healthy Baby Godwin, the "Moringa baby," with his grateful mother one year after starting on Moringa food supplements.

Photo by Mozart Adevu

Presence of the Holy Spirit is felt during dedication of the new C.A. Dillon Chapel at the MERCI Center

By Julie Brown *

A cool breeze blew through the open doors of the MERCI warehouse bringing a tangible reminder of the Holy Spirit.

The doors were wide open in welcome to over 50 people who gathered at the MERCI Center and dedicated the facility's newly completed chapel on Oct. 9.

Carved from an area toward the front of the re-organized warehouse, the chapel includes wooden pews found earlier this year in an all-but-forgotten section of the warehouse after Banded Brothers, Inc. took over management of MERCI.

While the origins of the gently curving pews are unknown, other elements in the chapel have a long sense of history and continuity.

The paraments, also found in the warehouse, have stitching on the back indicating they were given in honor and memory of several dedicated church women.

A piano was given by Garner UMC and an organ was also recently donated.

Two Duke Divinity School interns, Gladwyn Hinnant Uzzell and Jesse Baker, spent part of their summer transforming the chapel space, and United Methodist NOMADS and youth in the summer Footprints program also worked on the chapel.

The NC Conference, which relocated to Garner last summer, used a new design for the chapel in the new headquarters.

The Rev. Carol Goehring contacted

a number of people connected to the familiar chapel elements from the Raleigh building's Assembly room. Would they mind if the items were given to MERCI for the new chapel there? No, they were glad that the elements would have a new purpose.

Thus, the altar, created by a North Carolina artist from Warsaw, the triptych painted by the Rev. Gayla Estes Collins, and a metal candelabra found a new home in the

MERCI Center chapel.

During the dedication, Bishop Al Gwinn called the chapel "a place where the holy Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit" would be known. "This place will be a cherished place for the Word of God, a place of prayer," he said.

In the chapel, groups of people of all ages will "seek to remember that they are empowered by God to move forth in verbs," said Gwinn.

The bishop noted that verbs are more important than nouns: deeds more important than simple words. "It is about doing, and loving and walking."

During his reflection, Gwinn noted that it was "most appropriate" to dedicate the chapel to C.A. Dillon who has lived his life focused on "loving God with all his heart, mind, soul and spirit."

Dillon is past president of the Raleigh District United Methodist Men and a lifelong member of Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh.

He met his wife of 54 years, Mildred, while singing together in the Chancel Choir, and several of their children and grandchildren attended the dedication.

Dillon has served for many years as part of the Prison Fellowship Ministry with inmates on death row and in a number of other leadership roles.

Addressing those gathered, Dillon told of a visit he and his wife made to MERCI. They were able to meet the staff and hear about all of the things going on at the center. "We saw how many people are being blessed from around the world," he said.

"We see how this place and those in this place are serving Jesus Christ. It is my prayer that the people who come here are able to give hope....and that people who don't know Jesus will find that place in their heart before they leave," said Dillon. "To God be the glory for the great things he has done and will do through this facility."

* Julie Brown is a member of Fuquay-Varina UMC and an assignment writer for the NCC Christian Advocate.



LEFT: The new MERCI chapel was dedicated in honor of C.A. Dillon. At left, (L-R) C.A. Dillon receives a commemorative plaque presented by Mark Edmondson, Raleigh District vice president of the United Methodist Men. Over 50 people attended the dedication service including members of C.A. Dillon's family, and members of the MERCI board, and members of Banded Brothers, the non-profit now managing the MERCI Center.

(Photos by Julie Brown)



ABOVE: A section of the MERCI warehouse adjacent to the Cleaning Bucket assembly area has been transformed into a chapel which seats approximately 50. The construction of the chapel was the work of many including United Methodist NOMADS volunteers, youth Footprints teams, MERCI staff, and two Duke Divinity school interns.

Outside the chapel, temporary seating was setup for the dedication service.



The Rev. Carol Goehring, NC Conference executive director of connectional ministries and Church Revitalization, led the congregation in a litany of purpose. Behind her are visible the triptych, altar, and candelabra which were familiar elements in the Assembly Room at the former United Methodist Building in Raleigh. When the NC Conference relocated this summer, the elements were given to the MERCI Center for the new chapel.

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Schools adopt "Wesleyan Experience" program

An program designed to increase educational opportunities for students in Nash and Edgecombe counties and to spur economic growth in Eastern North Carolina has been approved by a group of Nash and Edgecombe county educators.

"The Wesleyan Experience" program is a collaborative effort involving North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, the Nash-Rocky Mount and the Edgecombe Early College High School programs, and Nash and Edgecombe community colleges.

The goal of the program is to provide college courses and college experiences to more students in Nash and Edgecombe counties, thus improving their scholastic opportunities and achievements.

"The Wesleyan Experience" is an integral part of the Learning Community/2+2+2 initiative formed October 11 among NC Wesleyan, the two community colleges, and the two public school systems.

The Learning Community/2+2+2 is designed to ultimately provide rewarding jobs for area citizens and to foster economic development in the two counties.

The collaborative was created with the support of the Carolinas Gateway Partnership, an industrial recruitment agency dedicated to the economic development of Eastern North Carolina, said Wesleyan President Jim Gray.

"That group and the schools believe this will give our region a distinctive advantage over other regions with whom we are competing for new jobs," Gray said.

"We see this as a five-pointed star that can lead the way to economic development, a superior workforce, and prosperity for Nash and Edgecombe counties," he said.

The Wesleyan Experience Program provides students who are enrolled in Early College High School an option that includes enhanced admission to Wesleyan for graduates with high GPAs, plus scholarships and early access to the NC Wesleyan campus.

Students will be offered an honorary affiliation with Wesleyan that will allow them to enroll in selected Wesleyan courses through the college's High School Credit Bank Program at the reduced High School Scholars rate of \$35 per credit hour rather than the regular rate of \$330 per credit hour for 1 to 7 course credit hours.

In addition, a letter of understanding guarantees admission to students who wish to consider transferring to Wesleyan after graduation,

and a scholarship is possible if students meet all regular admission standards with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5. This does not require students to transfer to Wesleyan.

A special honorary NC Wesleyan Experience card will be provided to permit entrance to students and their parents/guardians, at no charge, to home athletic events, on-campus lectures and other cultural events (not to social events or clubs) that do not require additional fees for NCWC students.

Students will be able to begin the program this month.

Other provisions of the agreement include:

- ♦ Credits earned will transfer in accordance with the Statewide NC Community College Articulation Agreement.
- ♦ Special grade-level specific programming will add value to the educational experience.
- ♦ Students who graduate from Early College with an Associate Degree are eligible for the

2+ Wesleyan program. This equalizes out-of-pocket cost for a commuting student with the resident student cost of NC state universities (benchmark is NC State University).

- ♦ Wesleyan admissions and financial aid counselors will provide guidance to Early College students and families.
- ♦ A number of scholarships, which can range up to full-tuition, have been set up to help students transfer to Wesleyan.

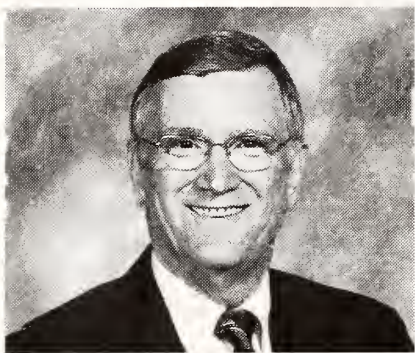
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"Let us not love with words,
but with actions and in truth."
1 John 3:18



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

December 5, 2010

Text: Isaiah 40 : 1-5, 25-26, 29-31
"The Highway for God"

Let me say it upfront. I might be stretching just a bit here to make a point. It has to do with the way this chapter in Isaiah begins. It begins in the plural.

The injunction to "comfort," the call to "speak tenderly," and the instruction to "cry" to God's people—these are all written in Old Testament language in the plural (Isaiah 40:1-2).

It is as if these verses could be translated, "Y'all comfort my people! Y'all speak tenderly to Jerusalem! Y'all cry to her the news that her penalty is paid."

Who is this "y'all"?

Here's where I get on sort of a scholarly slippery slope. Some students of this passage think that Isaiah is directing this teaching to the prophets. Others say it is aimed at the priests. Many think the "y'all" is a sort of heavenly council who await the commands of God.

I wonder if Isaiah has intended to invite the whole family of God to comfort, to speak tenderly, and to cry to God's people. Maybe we are the "y'all." Who better to speak to the family than the family?

Who better than all the children of God to remind the children of God of the promises made to the children of God? (I said this was sort of a slippery slope!)

In this text, "Jerusalem" (Isaiah 40:2, 9) is not the geographically identifiable city so much as it is a symbol for all of the people of God. Isaiah 40:5 speaks of "all the people."

Verse 9 mentions "Zion," often a term for the whole people of God. Isaiah 40:11 sees the family of God as a flock. Verse 26 is about the host.

There is so much of the community nature of God's work (God chooses to work in community) that I guess I'm

pondering the possibility that these opening verses of chapter 40 are plural so as to include the full people of God. Might the Lord be saying to us, "Y'all look out for one another now, ya' hear?"

What Someone Else Has Said:

Barrie Tabraham (*The Making of Methodism*, Epworth Press) has quoted a British Methodist document "(Methodism's) emphasis on connexion is not just tradition or administrative convenience. It is about the sharing of resources, made available by the willing consent of the whole body, so that need in one part may be met and so that, in the mission of the church, any part may be the whole."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of us all, we Your people praise You and, by Your grace, offer our care to one another..."

December 12, 2010

Text: Isaiah 41:8-10, 17-20
"I Am Your God"

When I was in elementary school, several of us neighborhood boys used to play in a lumber yard that was on our route home from school.

It was probably quite dangerous, but we had a good time. The lumber was stacked in such a way that a small person—and we were all small—could squeeze down inside the stack and simply disappear.

After we got hidden, we'd wait for another boy to go looking, trying to find the stack into which we had gone.

One day, Frank hid so well that we could not spot him, so we finally decided that he had slipped away and gone home.

Later, he told us, that he had waited and waited and waited for us to find him.

Finally, he could no longer hear us or see us. It was getting dark—December dark. So, he said, "I called out: is there anybody there?" No answer.

"Does anybody know where I am?"

No answer.

So he crawled out and made his way home to a cold supper.

Maybe that memory of the lumber

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* series.

yard bounced back to me because of all the references to trees in these verses (acacia, myrtle, olive, cypress, fir, pine—Isaiah 41:19-20).

But I really think because Frank's plaintive cry reminded me of what the Israelites must have said when they languished in exile: Is there anybody there? Does anybody know where I am?

This week's study is the answer God gave to those questions: "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God" (Isaiah 41:10a).

It is a reassuring word to a people who must have felt forgotten.

It is a comforting word to those who have felt the sting of disappointment and heart-sickness of loss.

It is an inspiring word to those whose journey has had more hang-ups than highways.

Do you see yourself in any of those situations?

With Israel, have you felt exiled from values that are important to you?

With God's people now scattered in Babylon, have you felt separated from life's good moments?

John Wesley said the Bible was twice inspired: once when written and again when read.

When written, these verses were a gift to the exiled people of Israel ("I am with you") and, when read, these verses are a gift to our own broken places ("I am with you"). Quoting W. H. Auden on the birth of Christ: "Now and forever we are not alone."

What Someone Else Has Said:

William H. Allen IV (*And God Showed Up...*, Contemporary Publishing) wrote about a high school student's car: "It could well be the ugliest car in town...it has a bumper sticker that says, 'Don't let the car fool you; my treasure is in heaven.'"

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "For Your presence, thanks!..."

December 19, 2010

Text: Isaiah 9:7; 11:1-8
"The Mission of the Servant"

The closer we get to Christmas, the more we see everything through the lens of the birth of Jesus.

This lesson is intended for the fourth Sunday of Advent, so the expectations of the season are almost palpable. We are on a countdown to the 25th: shopping lists, family visits, sadness-touched memories, ubiquitous decorations, stretched bank accounts, happy greetings, candlelight worship, excited children, exhausted clerks, warm hospitality... few times of the year reach across such a wide range of feeling and thought.

So, in the midst of all the season's rush, tinsel, and emotion, we come to reflect on something written about 2,800 years ago.

Isaiah knew nothing of shopping malls and festooned Fraser firs, but he surely knew something about what God intended for God's people.

Because we have never seen these intentions lived out except in Jesus Christ, we have tended to think that Isaiah must have had a preview of the Savior.

Probably not.

But God revealed to this prophet how things would be when God's will came and lived among us.

What is it like when God's spirit is among us? Wisdom (Isaiah 11:2). Understanding (11:2). Counsel (11:2). Strength (11:2). Knowledge (11:2). Awe (11:2). Righteousness (11:4). Fairness (11:4). Judgment (11:4). Faithfulness (11:5). And all of the created order living in harmony (11:6-8).

That's a pretty extensive shopping list! But the good news of the season is that God has offered us that gift in the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and final coming of our Lord.

No wonder it takes so many efforts at recognizing, celebrating, enjoying what the birth of Jesus means!

No one experience is going to capture all that God has given in the Gift!

No wonder that the name given this child is "Jesus"—God saves.

No wonder that he is labeled "Emmanuel"—God with us. No wonder that we come to remember his birth with wonder!

What Someone Else Has Said:

Garrison Keillor (*Life Among the Lutherans*, Augsburg Books) writes:

See "Bible Study," page 13

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Jack Ewing to start Jan. 1 as new executive director of Lake Junaluska Assembly

Dr. John "Jack" L. Ewing, Jr. has been named the new executive director of Lake Junaluska Assembly Inc.

He will begin his new duties on Jan. 1, and fills a position that is being vacated by the retirement of the Rev. Jimmy L. Carr.

Ewing currently serves as the executive director of the Foundation for Evangelism, which is also based at Lake Junaluska.

He comes from a family of United Methodist pastors. His father, maternal grandfather, father-in-law, grandfather-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter, and son-in-law were or are United Methodist ministers.

Ewing has degrees from Asbury College (1974), the University of Kentucky (1975), and the University of Minnesota (1982).

Ewing has served on the faculty of his alma mater and South Dakota State University. He also served as president of two United Methodist institutions of higher education: Dakota Wesleyan University (1994-2000) and Mount Union College (2000-2005).

"I am excited about the opportunity to build on the good work of those that have gone before me. Lake Junaluska is a special place, and together we will make it an even more special place for many more people," said Ewing during

a presentation to the Lake Junaluska Board of Directors.

Service to the United Methodist Church has been an important part of Jack's life. He and his wife Cynthia have been active in their local congregations, often taking on significant leadership roles.

Jack has served as a delegate to annual conferences, and has been elected as a delegate to both Jurisdictional Conferences (1996 & 2000) and General Conference (2000).

His presidential colleagues recognized his leadership ability by selecting him as the President of the United Methodist College and University Presidents Association for 2003-04.



Dr. John "Jack" L. Ewing, Jr.

Adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

"The feeling of newness, of starting over fresh. It's a real Christmas feeling of starting new, with fresh hope—it's how people who celebrate Christmas are supposed to feel, anyhow. We know this and as Christmas builds up around us, we wait for some spark, some inspiration to touch our hearts, something more than nostalgia."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Holy Child. Visit us again. Bring into our hearts that vision of a world of peace and joy and equity, so we shall become a people open to the ways You work that vision into the present tense, Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven..."

December 26, 2010

Text: Isaiah 43:1-7, 11-12
"I Will Be With You"

One of the best known scenes in the biblical account of the birth of Jesus is the account recorded in Luke 2:10, the message of the angel to the terrified shepherds: "Fear not" (King James Version) ... "Do not be afraid" (New Revised Standard Version).

That reassurance from the angel echoes what the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 43:1: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you..."

The Book of Isaiah uses no less than eight different Hebrew words that get translated "fear!"

The words can mean anything from formal worship to great respect to expectation of evil to fright to shaking-in-the-boots terror.

In this week's study text—"Do not

fear, for I have redeemed you..."—it is the word that means "terrified." This is no simple upset and mild concern; this is talking about heavy duty scared-witless kind of fear.

It is the fear of being deserted by God (Exodus 5:22-23).

It is the fear of standing before the deep waters of the Red Sea and hearing the beating hoofs of the approaching Egyptian army (Exodus 14:9-10).

It is the fear of walking across the desert and finding there is no water (Exodus 17:1-3). Sheer, paralyzing terror.

But God, through Isaiah, reminds the Hebrew children that in every one of these times of terror, they have been redeemed by God's saving hand (43:1).

God led them out of Egypt's slavery. God led them across the Red Sea. God led them to find water. Redeemed.

Now we have another story of redemption: the birth of the Savior. The shepherds were told not to fear, not to fear this new thing, not to

fear this light that broke into their customary darkness, not to fear this new relationship.

What do we fear?

Can that fear hear an echo from the fields outside of Bethlehem?

Can that fear hear an echo from the One who makes all things new?

Can that fear hear an echo from a baby whose crying in a manger let us know that God has come to live among us?

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Yann Martel's novel *The Life of Pi* (Canongate), the 16 year-old boy who is the central character muses: "I must say a word about fear. It is life's true opponent. Only fear can defeat life....It goes for your weakest spot, which it finds with unerring ease...Disbelief is a poorly armed foot soldier."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Redeemer, be born anew in my heart and cast away those fears that would bind me..."

BIRTH

Cade Thomas Duckworth was born on Oct. 18, to Josh (Durham: Rehobeth) and Jade Duckworth.

DEATHS

EUBANKS, Lina, widow of George B. Eubanks, died Oct. 5. The funeral was Oct. 7 in Kinston.

VITKUS, Ray, husband of Kerry Vitkus (Durham: Mt. Carmel) died Sept. 25. A memorial service was held Sept. 30 at Fuquay-Varina UMC.

MARSHBURN, Jodie, wife of Eric Marshburn (New Bern: Holly Ridge new church) died Sept. 18. A memorial service was held Sept. 23 at New Song UMC.

KRUEGER, Todd (Goldsboro: New Hope) died Oct. 16. A memorial service was held at New Hope UMC on Oct. 20.

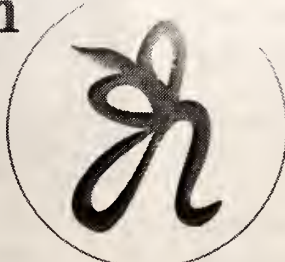
McMILLAN III, Samuel D. (Mack), (Rocky Mount: district superintendent) died Oct. 25. A Service of Death and Resurrection was held on Oct. 28 at First UMC: Rocky Mount.

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calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pilgrimage - Nov. 12-14

Youth leaders, it is time to be planning for youth groups to attend Pilgrimage 2010 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville. The keynote speaker will be Bart Campolo and the Pilgrimage House Band will provide music. Pilgrimage is a time for youth and youth leaders to share worship, service, fellowship, and fun. Learn more at <http://nccpilgrimage.org>.

Church Treasurer/Finance Training

Local church treasurer and finance committee training will be held on Saturday, November 20, 2010, from 10:00-3:00 at the United Methodist Building at 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner, NC. Local church finance basics will be covered as well as updates from recent legislative changes.

Local church treasurers, finance committee members and pastors are encouraged to attend. Seats are limited so registration is required.

There will be a \$10 registration fee charged to help offset the cost of training materials and lunch. To register, please contact the Conference Treasurer's Office at 800-849-4433 or kbell@nccumc.org.

5K on Nov. 20 at Chestnut Ridge

A Family Fun Run will be held at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center in Effland, on Nov. 20.

This race is to help benefit the "Pass It On" Annual Fund camping which supports the NC Conference Camp & Retreat Ministry's programs, enhances facilities and equipment and helps send children and youth to camp through the campership scholarship program.

There will be a mini-race for younger members of participating families and a worship service will conclude the events. For more information and to register online go to www.campchestnutridge.org and select "5K Run on Nov 20" from the news listings.

Congress on Evangelism convenes January 2011 in Myrtle Beach

Set for Jan. 4-7, 2011 at the Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach, SC, the Congress on Evangelism is sponsored by the Council on Evangelism and the General Board of Discipleship with the support of The Foundation for Evangelism.

The congress meets every January at different locations presenting motivational speakers and workshops based on evangelism. Learn more and register online at <http://congressonevangelism.org/>.

Grant applications due for ministry with older adults - Jan. 15

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is providing grants related to older adult ministry in the area of Caregiving Ministry in 2011, the General Board of Discipleship has announced.

The grants, part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries, will be available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions.

All grant applications will be reviewed by the United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries. The committee is also responsible for the selection process.

Submission deadline is Jan. 15, 2011. Grants will be awarded by the committee in Fall 2011.

For further information and an application, go to www.aging-umc.org and select Caregiving Ministry with Older Adults Grant Application.

Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land - Jan. 24

Travel with Bishop Gwinn on a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 2011. Depart on Jan. 24 and visit all the holy sites, worship together, experience the teachings of Bishop Gwinn, and walk where Jesus walked. Contact Harold Salmon, Conference Director of Tour Ministries at 919-377-2950.

Tickle at Winter Soulstice - Feb. 4-5

The North Carolina Academy for Spiritual Formation has announced that nationally-recognized author and speaker Phyllis Tickle will be featured at Winter Soulstice, a Friday night-Saturday retreat to be held at Saint Francis United Methodist Church in Cary, Feb. 4-5, 2011.

Tickle will be presenting from her new book, "The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why." In her discussion, Tickle will explain signs indicating that Christendom is once again going through a reformation and will give hints about what can be expected. More details will be announced later. The Academy for Spiritual Formation is sponsored by The Upper Room, Nashville, TN and jointly sponsors the North Carolina 5-day Academy with the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Rethinking Worship & Song Event - March 1-3, 2011

A national event to introduce Worship & Song, a new collection of song and worship resources developed by The General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House has been announced for March 1-3, 2011 in Nashville, TN. The Worship & Song print and digital resources are scheduled for release in February 2011. The event will include worship, singing, and learning, and features workshops with Carlton Young, Marcia McFee, Mark Miller, and many others. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/bsb5FD>.

conference CALENDAR

November

- 2 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 6 Conference UMW DO-IT-DAY - Durham District, 9:30am
- 9 Day of Learning, "Ultimately Responsible" at St. James UMC: Greenville
- 10 Day of Learning, "Ultimately Responsible" at Edenton St. UMC: Raleigh
- 11 Older Adults Ministry Committee, 10am
- 12-14 Pilgrimage, Crown Center: Fayetteville
- 12 Board of Pensions, 10am

- 19-21 UMW Leadership Training Event (LTE)
- 20 Local Church Treasurer/Finance Training, 10am
- 20 Family Fun Run, Camp Chestnut Ridge
- 25-26 Thanksgiving (UMB Closed)
- 28 United Methodist Student Day Special Sunday

December

- 6 Conference Connectional Table
- 7 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 24-27 Christmas Holiday (UMB Closed)

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

Around the CONFERENCE



Wilmington District - CROP Walk

The Wilmington District came out in force to support the 2010 CROP Hunger Walk. The annual walk took place on Oct. 10 at Hugh MacRae Park. Over 200 walkers were inspired by Bob Townsend of WECT who presided over the activities. Nearly \$9,000 was raised to fund hunger-related projects worldwide. Twenty five percent of the donations stay in New Hanover County and go to Good Shepherd Ministries and Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Church World Services/CROP has raised over \$264 million dollars for world hunger relief and local mission projects.



Stonewall UMW - Cleaning Kits

Stonewall UM Women recently met and assembled Cleaning Kits for the MERCI Center which serves as part of the UMCOR Relief Supply Network. These kits are prepared for use in any national disaster such as recent floods or hurricane disaster locations. The UMW collected donations to buy the required items. After Barbara Carey (president) purchased the items, they were packed by the women into 5 gallon buckets by the membership.



Zebulon UMC - Playground

To enhance the preschool and other church activities, Zebulon UMC installed two new pieces of playground equipment in September. Plans also include renovating two larger pieces to meet older youth needs. This project was accomplished through the donations by church members as well as financial assistance from the preschool.



Siloam UMC - Pennies for Pencils

The children of Siloam UMC in Jamesville collected a total of \$337.22 for their "Pennies for Pencils" project. It was used to buy 1440 pencils, 180 erasers, and 90 sharpeners and ship them to the children at a mission school in Ghana, West Africa. Cindy Price and Vicki Redman coordinated the effort. The children served as ushers each Sunday to collect loose change from the congregation. The church provides on-going support for the mission school and hopes to one day help build a permanent school house. Persons in the photo are (L-R) Rev. Janine Youngstrom, Alexandria H., Sara Lynn W., Cole M., William H., Vicki Redman, Gabe M. and Nathan R.



Fayetteville District - Lay Rally

The 66 United Methodist churches in the Fayetteville District celebrated a Lay Rally Day in May. The theme was "Community Support and Extending a Christian Hand." "It was a healthy, friendly, and spiritual good time enjoyed by all," said Colleen Astrike, Fayetteville District lay leader. Methodist University students sang during the event, which included a petting zoo. Students are shown holding a snake for the petting zoo.



Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

Experienced Writers Needed

At times, assignment writers are needed for the NCCC Advocate. Must be experienced with journalistic writing and AP Stylebook. Anyone interested should send samples of writing to Bill Norton, Advocate editor, bnorton@nccumc.org.

"Unity in the Journey" is theme of Order of Deacon gathering

By Tammie Grimm *

On Sept. 30 the Order of the Deacon of the NCCUMC met in Cary at St. Francis UMC for their annual day apart. "Unity in the Journey" was the theme that held the various activities of worship, Eucharist, contemplative practices and fellowship together in a retreat like setting.

Organized and inspired under the leadership of Judy Stephens and Alice Kunka, the deacons were joined by a few elders, including Bishop Al Gwinn, who celebrated the Eucharist. During the day, reflections were held on the biblical roots and the historical heritage of the diakonia, the servant leader ministry of the church, as a way to understand deacons present participation within it.

The gift of a banner depicting the servant ministry of the deacon poured out onto the world was presented to Bishop Gwinn on behalf of the order to hang in the new conference building. The banner was procured by the NC Order of Deacons after the 2007 "Celebrating Diakonia" an international convocation of Deacons and Diaconal Orders within the UMC. Bishop Gwinn offered to include the banner as a part of Annual Conference.

Opportunities for reflection and contemplation included engaging in *lectio divina*, which is a contemplative method of Scripture study; considering the life and ministry of several saints and walking a canvas labyrinth in the church's multipurpose room. These practices were woven together in a day that allowed participants to enjoy the company and conversation of one another as well as to meet new faces of persons seeking commissioning in NC and other nearby conferences.

The opportunity to explore the common bonds of ministry in bridging church and world by this diverse group of servants is a hallmark that will continue to reverberate with each participant in their own unique ministry setting.

* The Rev. Tammie Grimm, a deacon, is doing doctoral research on a PhD in Christian Education.



ABOVE LEFT: Joyce Horn (standing left) presents a banner to Bishop Al Gwinn on behalf of the Order of Deacons. The banner, one of four on display at the 2008 International Diakonia Conference, has been on display in many conference churches. On the banner is a pitcher which represents service. From the pitcher flows living water, poured out for the world, representing the role of the Deacon bridging the world and the church. Horn is a provisional deacon serving at Horne Memorial in Clayton.

BELOW RIGHT: "Journey" was the theme of the day apart for the deacons. All who were present for the day were invited to walk a labyrinth set up at St. Francis UMC in Cary for their own discernment and insight and to pray for their fellow deacons in their journeys.



10 Fold mission program reaches hundreds of thousands via web

By Larry R. Hygh Jr. *

10-Fold accomplished its purpose more than 40,000-fold. The online site attracted more than 417,000 people from 92 countries during a recent 10-day period featuring live webcasts about United Methodist projects throughout the world.

Two of the lives enriched were those of the Rev. Mark Terwilliger, pastor of Beach Lake UMC in Pennsylvania, and a youth from the church. Terwilliger was watching a webcast for 10-Fold

when he noticed the status post of one of his youth on Facebook. The youth said she was "bored," so he invited her to watch the webcast about the "Shade and Fresh Water Program," a project featuring sports, health and drama for children ages 6 to 14 from urban areas in Brazil. Thirty Methodist schools serve more than 3,500 kids.

By the end of the webcast, Terwilliger said, the youth "had asked questions, wanted to make a donation to Shade through the Advance, got UMVIM information to volunteer in Brazil, and wrote back to talk to me about leadership roles in the church."

10-Fold has been described as an online mission movement for the 21st century. For 10 days last month, the website featured live webcasts on church mission projects related to themes including children's health and wholeness, missionaries in the United States, missionaries around the world, church leader training, church planting worldwide, social justice, clean water and sanitation, health care in Africa and sustainable agriculture. The website features streaming videos, online chats and downloadable podcasts.

During the campaign, people could help by clicking the link of a particular project and becoming advocates. For each click, various church groups donated one dollar to the selected project, up to \$10,000. More than 43,000 advocates were counted. An additional \$30,000 was raised online for projects related to 10-Fold.

Terwilliger challenges United Methodists to look for ways to make connections with youth and young adults. "In our connectional church, we have so many amazing resources to plug in youth and young adults who are looking for something in life." More information about the 10-Fold initiative is available at www.10-Fold.org.

* Larry R. Hygh, Jr. is the associate general secretary, director of mission communications, for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.



(L-R) Patrick Friday communicates via web-based video with the Rev. Jong Sung Kim in Southeast Asia during a 10-Fold webcast from UM Communications in Nashville, TN. (Photo by Ronny Perry/UMNS)

Metzger new UMRH Trustees chair

At the Oct. 14 meeting of the United Methodist Retirement Homes (UMRH) Board of Trustees in Lumberton, Don Metzger of Lumberton was elected chairman, succeeding Mack B. Parker of Raleigh who has completed eight years of service, two of those years as chair.

Metzger currently serves as chair of the UMRH admissions committee, a member of the UMRH finance committee and as a member of the Wesley Pines Local Committee.

Metzger attended the University of Missouri earning a BA in civil

engineering and a MA in construction management. A civil engineer and contractor by trade, Metzger owned consulting and construction businesses in Cleveland, OH.

Relocating to Lumberton in 1980, he purchased the F. R. Bray Construction Company which later became Construction Systems Inc. (CSI). In 1999, Metzger sold the company and retired.

In Lumberton, Metzger has twice been chairman of the Lumberton Area Chamber of Commerce, served as a member of the Robeson County Community College Board of Trustees for four years, was president of the Committee of 100, and served on the United Way Board for eight years. He is currently a member of the Lumberton City Council.

He is a member of First Presbyterian Church, where he is an elder, sings in the choir, and serves on the finance, stewardship and endowment trust committees.



(L-R) Don Metzger and Mack Parker

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 155, No. 11

December 2010



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
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PILGRIMAGE 2010

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Photo by Steve Isaacs



2011 Mission and Service Commitments

North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church

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From the Bishop

Friends,

To brothers and sisters of the faith blessed by God to be serving in 2010-11,

All of us are quite familiar with Charles Dickens’ famous words, “These are the best of times, and these are the worst of times.”

Though these words were spoken long ago, they may accurately describe these current days in which we are living. If we listen to the press these are “woeful” days! Most everything is wrong, bad or falling apart! Doom is on the way!

Even if we are not swayed by the sensational reporting we know these are challenging days when many are in difficult circumstances. If the meaning of life is defined entirely by materialism, then these may be bad days for many in America.

But you and I serve a living Lord who teaches us that “mankind does not live by bread alone.” In fact, our Lord teaches us that “all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purposes.”

Do you believe that? Really believe it? If you do, you know that these “worst times” God is using to make the “best times” for those who will stay focused on loving him (with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength) and obeying his will (which is loving our neighbors as we love ourselves).

So, the true followers of Jesus know that our God is bigger than any circumstances and that he has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat!

What you will see in these next pages is a commitment to that truth! These vital ministries have been carefully scrutinized and evaluated in an attempt to make every dollar count and go as far as it will go.



Bishop Al Gwinn

At the same time, we know that God is attempting to advance His Kingdom through going after those who are lost as well as helping the helpless, feeding the hungry, caring for the elderly, teaching the children, ministering to the sick and a host of other wonderful things God is doing through his believers.

That’s you and me! That’s our connectional family! That’s our local congregation!

And, when every one of us is faithful in doing our part even in the “worst of times” then God has promised to make these the “best of times.” I believe that! And, I believe you do too!

My love for God and belief in his promises moves me to give one hundred and ten percent in these times. I know your love and belief will move you to do the same!

Excited to be serving Him,

Al Gwinn

Bishop Al Gwinn
North Carolina Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church

Metzger new UMR

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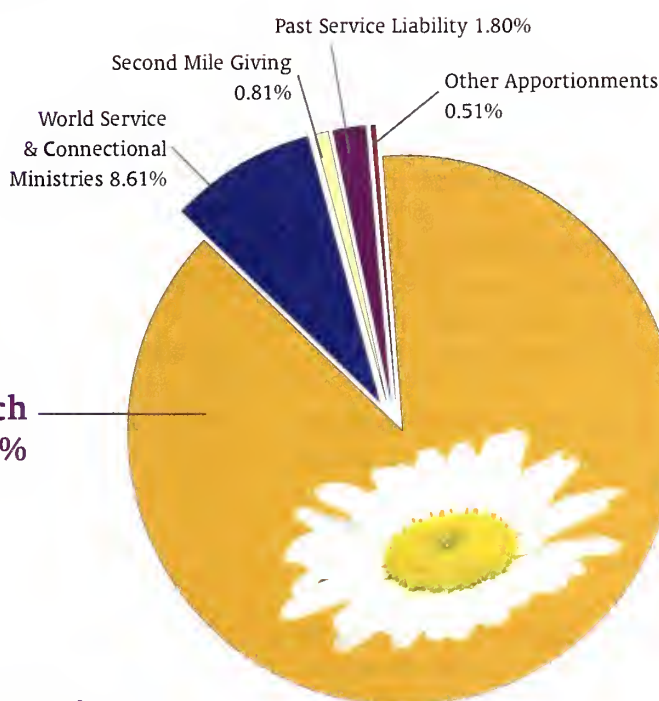
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Look at where your Gift of one dollar goes... ✱

**Your Local Church
Expenses 88.27%**



**88.27% of every dollar you give
stays in your local church and is spent as follows:**

- 41.54% Local Church Programs, Operating Expenses, and Benevolences:**
These funds are expended for operational needs such as utilities, building maintenance, salaries and benefits, office supplies, local programs such as Sunday Schools and youth activities, and local benevolences.
- 25.86% Local Pastor(s) Salaries and Benefits:**
This item reflects the compensation paid to the local church's pastor or pastors in the form of salary, travel, utilities, and continuing education allowances. It also represents the church's portion of pension payments on behalf of its pastor(s) and supplemental benefits for items such as hospitalization and life insurance.
- 20.87% Local Building and Debt Retirement:**
This represents capital improvements, mortgages, and debt retirements related to local church buildings and property. Building programs and other capital investments unique to each church are not included in calculating conference apportionments.

* Based on grand total of all expenditures as reported on the 2009 Table II.

Your Gifts at Work



Photo by Steve Isaacs

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Apportionments

The Apportionment Formula

The apportionment formula is approved by each Annual Conference session and is based on how a church spends money.

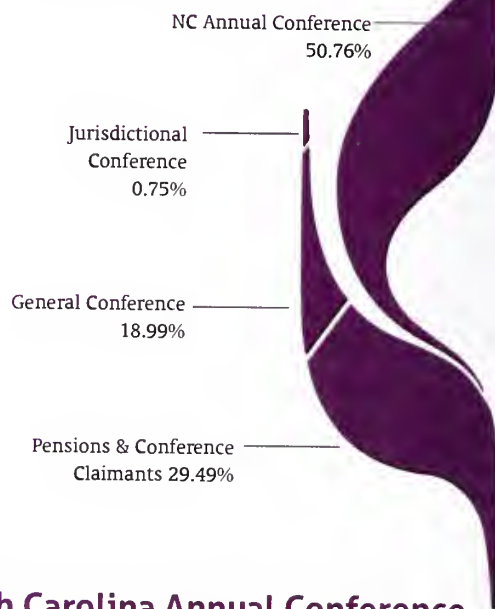
The base amount of local church expenses is calculated by adding up all expenditures reported on Table II and then subtracting exclusions (as listed below).

Each church's base is then compared to the total of all base amounts for all other churches and the budget approved at the last Annual Conference is distributed to each church using the same ratio.

Unadjusted apportionments will not increase more than 15% from the previous year.

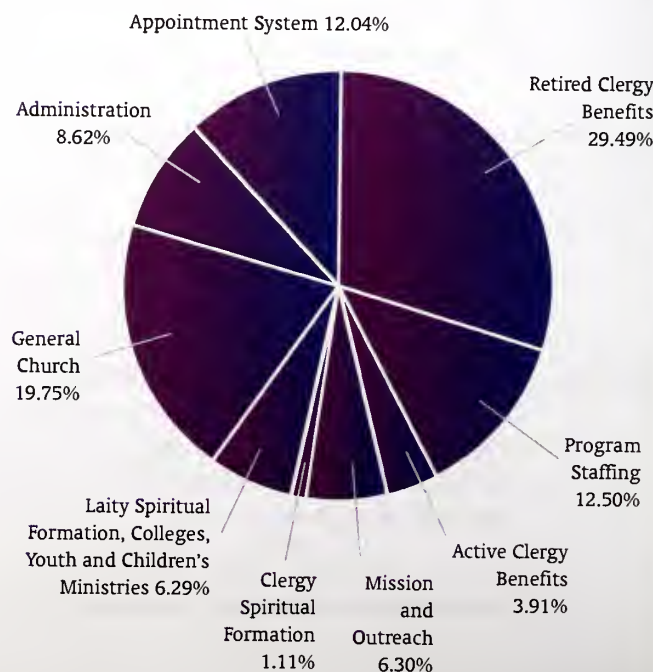
The exclusions are: Payments on World Service and Connectional Ministries, Past Service Liability-Pensions, Episcopal Fund and all other apportionments; district work fund; principal and interest on indebtedness; buildings and improvements; 50% of property insurance; local benevolences paid directly by the church; General and Conference Advance Specials; Ten Dollar Club; up to \$4,500 for travel paid by a charge for each pastor; United Methodist Student Day; Human Relations Day; Peace with Justice Sunday; Native American Awareness Sunday; One Great Hour of Sharing; World Communion Sunday; UMW Funds sent to district and conference treasurer; housing allowance paid in lieu of furnished parsonage to a minister serving under Episcopal appointment in a charge of the conference; offerings taken for disasters as designated by the Disaster Response Committee and the Resident Bishop.

2012 North Carolina Annual Conference Budget To Be Raised in 2011



North Carolina Annual Conference 2012 Budget Distribution

In 2009, 808 churches in the NC Conference, with a total membership of 237,458, spent \$172,413,375 for all causes. This translates to \$726.08 per member. Based on these disbursements, the 2012 Budget (which is funded by 2011 apportionments) is as follows:



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Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
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NC Annual Conference Mission & Service Needs To Be Raised in 2011 for 2012

Totals by Conference

	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
General Conference	\$ 3,864,431	18.99%	1.85%
Jurisdictional Conference	\$ 153,388	0.75%	0.00%
Pensions & Conference Claimants	\$ 6,000,000	29.49%	0.00%
Annual Conference	\$10,327,806	50.76%	-0.01%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$ 20,345,625	100.00%	0.34%

Totals by Program or Ministry Area

	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries			
** World Service	\$ 2,013,941	9.90%	1.89%
NCC Connectional Ministries	\$ 14,081,314	69.21%	0.06%
** Past Service Liability-Pensions	\$ 3,300,000	16.22%	0.00%
** Episcopal Fund	\$ 565,233	2.78%	3.96%
** Africa University Fund	\$ 60,738	0.30%	0.53%
** Black College Fund	\$ 271,383	1.33%	0.53%
** Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	\$ 53,016	0.26%	0.67%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$ 20,345,625	100.00%	0.34%

Further details on the Program and Ministry areas
are available on pages 6-10.

** Within the NC Conference, budget funds are raised one year and spent the next.
Items with asterisks are spent the same year raised.

Mission & Service Needs



Photo by Steve Isaacs

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Mission & Service Commitments

Mission & Service Commitments for 2012 World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries

World Service **

The World Service Fund is the basic benevolence fund of the Church, designated in *The Book of Discipline* as "the first benevolent responsibility of the Church" (paragraph 812). Receipts are distributed to the general program agencies and other benevolent causes by a precise formula. These agencies resource local churches and extended local church mission nationally and internationally. The World Service Fund allows United Methodists to participate in meaningful ways in God's mission throughout the world.

Total: \$2,013,941



NC Annual Conference Connectional Ministries

Outreach Ministry Team
Serves to carry forth ministry
that transforms the world

Criminal Justice

& Mercy Ministries \$11,400
Development and coordination of ministries in jails and prisons and advocacy for prison reform.

DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries \$30,000

Carries DISCIPLE Bible Study into our state's prisons and smaller churches.

Disaster Response \$5,000

Provides organization, training, oversight of United Methodist disaster response.

Methodist Home of Children \$200,000

Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

Methodist Retirement Homes \$200,000

Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

Golden Cross Fund \$15,050

Assists in payment of hospital bills, physicians, medicine and other medical expenses for laypersons with special needs.

Missions and Outreach \$492,220

Provides salary support for Church and Community workers. Funds mission projects, rural and urban ministries, assists minority churches, administers building loans and grants to local churches, and interprets missions programs.

Board of Institutions \$500

Reviews and supports the conference relationship with institutions to whom the conference is related "by faith": camps, Methodist Home for Children, Asbury Homes, Methodist Retirement Homes, UM Foundation, and the colleges.

Disability Concerns \$2,000

Task force created to support the Commission on Disability Concerns.

Refugee and Immigration \$16,000

Assists with refugee resettlement and interpretation of immigration policy.

Leadership Team
Serves to equip leaders
who implement the Vision

Multicultural Ministries Team \$8,000

Strengthens local churches reaching out to racial ethnic people and building bridges among races.

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North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Multicultural Ministries Grants \$50,000

Provides grants for ministries of inclusiveness in districts and local churches.

Multicultural Ministries Programs \$135,770

Provides program funds for conference ministries of inclusiveness.

Monitoring and Accountability \$4,950

Monitors for inclusiveness in regard to gender, ethnicity, age, and handicapping conditions.

** Ministerial Education Fund \$680,358

Assists in the education and training of clergy and diaconal ministers in our conference.

Board of Ordained/

Diaconal Ministry \$195,500

Funds enlistment, preparation, examination, continuing education and career development for persons serving in ordained ministry and continues relationships with diaconal ministers.

Board of Ordained Ministry:

Sexual Ethics Program \$18,000

Funds one position to provide training or clergy and churches regarding sexual ethics.

Seminary Visitation \$4,000

Assists in maintaining contact with clergy candidates and in sharing opportunities available in the ordained ministry in our conference.

Bishop's Days Apart \$8,000

Bishop's program for renewal of clergy leadership.

Laity \$28,000

Promotes training for laypersons serving as leaders in the church and community; leadership training workshops, district and conference rallies, and programs.

Committee on Episcopacy \$1,200

Serves as support and advisory group on matters related to episcopal leadership.

Office of the Bishop \$31,000

Operations supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.

District Superintendents Fund

Salaries and Benefits \$1,514,035

Travel \$104,000

Cabinet Meeting-

Related Expenses \$40,000

Cabinet Discretionary Fund \$5,000

Bishop's Discretionary Fund \$2,000

Funds for use by bishop for emergencies or other needs not funded.

Director of Ministerial Relations

Salaries and Benefits \$343,459

Salaries and benefits for three persons.

Office \$24,500

Office expenses, travel, telephone.

Christian Unity \$7,000

Interprets, advocates, and works for the unity of the Christian Church, encourages dialogue and cooperation.

NC Council of Churches \$18,000

Promotes Christian Unity, interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and advocates for social justice in our State Legislature.

Effective Ministry Program \$25,000

Provides assistance for pastors' salaries during medical or other urgent conditions and transition.

NCC Staff Relations Committee \$1,300

Supports meeting expenses of the personnel committee for the conference staff.

Nominations \$2,000

Supports meeting expenses of the conference Nominations Committee.

Mission & Service Commitments

**Healthy Congregations and
Effective Leaders
in Every Place**
**Making Disciples
of Jesus Christ
for the
Transformation
of the World**

— NC Conference
Mission/Vision Statement

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Christian Formation Team

— Serves to form & nurture disciples of Jesus Christ

Evangelism \$99,955

Promotes evangelism programs and ministries. Provides training and resources to local churches and districts.

Church & Society \$15,000

Relates the gospel of Jesus Christ to people and to the structures of the communities, nation and world in which they live, and develops programs which provide education and action on issues confronting the Church consistent with the Social Principles and the policies adopted by the General Conference.

Spiritual Life \$13,000

Provides opportunities for persons to grow in faith through spiritual disciplines.

Worship \$5,200

Designs worship for Annual Conference, and offers worship training for local congregations.

Higher Education and Campus Ministry \$7,000

Provides support for campus ministries, administers scholarships, connects colleges and the local church.

College Chaplaincy Support \$275,000

Assists Louisburg College, Methodist University, N.C. Wesleyan College, Duke Divinity School, High Point University, Greensboro College and Bennett College.

College Chaplaincy Support -Reserve \$68,750

Provides reserve for transitioning College Chaplaincy Support budget line to be raised in advance.

Campus Ministry \$501,000

Supports United Methodist ministry on campuses in the NC Conference through Wesley Foundations and Fellowships, and ecumenical campus ministries.

Young Adults \$4,050

Supports meetings and work of Young Adult Ministries Council, resources for local church young adult ministry, financial assistance for those attending Church-related young adult ministry offerings.

Youth Ministry \$60,300

Supports meetings and work of Council on

Youth Ministries including seed money for youth events such as Global Vision, Kaleidoscope, Rally Day, Summer Breakaway, Appalachian Trail Hike, Annual Conference Session for Youth, and Pilgrimage.

Children's Ministries \$19,450

Supports meetings and programs of Children's Ministry Team including curriculum resource team, scholarships, continuing education events, and workshops. Also funds Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee meetings, resources, and training events.

Older Adult Ministry \$ 6,000

Supports programs and training by providing resources and information about the needs and issues concerning aging.

NCCUM Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc. \$275,000

Provides funding to support the administrative oversight of Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee, and Rockfish Camp and Retreat Centers.

Education and Nurture \$3,200

Strengthens and develops local church ministries of Christian nurture.

Emerging Church Support \$854,200

Provides salaries, housing, and benefits for pastors of new churches and administration of the Office of New Faith Communities.

New Faith Communities Salaries and Benefits \$226,578

Salaries/benefits for two staff.

Office Expenses \$64,200

Office expenses and travel.

Archives & History \$7,650

Funds meeting expenses for commission, maintains records and history of conference.

Conference Media Center \$6,300

Provides ongoing support for operations in the conference Media Center.

Stewardship Team —

Serves to empower ministry

Stewardship \$13,250

Interprets stewardship theologically, promotes stewardship education and programs.

Annual Conference Expense \$200,000

Housing, food, and other expenses for the An-

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PILGRIMAGE 2010

Annual Conference session of over 2,300 members (lay and clergy).

**Annual Conference Registrar
Salary & Benefits \$4,000**

**Conference Secretary's Office
Salaries and Benefits \$91,080**
Provides for full-time clerical assistance, a stipend for the conference secretary.
Office Expenses \$19,000

Conference Journal/Printing \$40,000
Provides for the cost of producing the Conference Journal, directory, and Book of Recommendations.

Communications \$88,500
Resources for interpretive materials such as this publication, news releases, news media relations, Rethink Church, production of Saddlebag at Annual Conference, Audio/Visual support at Annual Conference, electronic equipment purchase and maintenance, video production, e-mail communications, video streaming and webinars, website nccumc.org, and local church assistance with web page design and support.

Publications: NCC Christian Advocate . . . \$30,000
Provides a subscription for every NC conference pastor and widow/er and additional support for the newspaper published by the conference.

****General Administration \$219,762**
The General Conference, World Methodist Council, Judicial Council, General Commission on Archives & History, and in part, the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Pensions, and special litigation costs.

****SEJ Mission & Ministry \$153,388**
Supports a cooperative ministry to United Methodists in the Southeast including SEJ Jurisdictional Conference, Lake Junaluska, and Jurisdictional Council expenses.

**Conference Treasurer's Office
Salaries and Benefits \$673,105**
Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of ten full or part-time staff, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.
Office \$217,860
Operating expenses of conference treasurer's office and statistician, including annual audit.

Treasurer Bonding & Insurance \$10,790
A conference-held bond covering designated financial officers in the local church.

**Information Management
Salaries and Benefits \$202,899**
Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of three full or part-time staff, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.

Office \$74,300
Provides funding for the management and maintenance of the conference information technology infrastructure, including computer hardware, software, and network administration.

Conference Board of Trustees \$1,750
Funds meetings and work of this board.

Contingency Fund \$15,000
Provides for unanticipated needs; administered by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

****Methodist Building
Operating Fund \$175,000**

****Methodist Building
Capital Fund \$200,000**

Episcopal Residence \$15,000
Maintenance supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.

Staff Housing \$111,047
Provides housing for four clergy positions of the Annual Conference.

Legal Counsel \$20,000
Provides for conference legal expenses not funded by a particular board or agency.

**Committee on Equitable
Compensation \$125,000**
Supplements salaries of eligible clergy to the base salary level determined by Annual Conference.

Minister's Moving Expense \$185,000
Assists in the moving expenses of pastors.

Joint Committee on Incapacity \$461,058
Assists clergy who temporarily cannot serve due to incapacity.

**Conference Claimants -
Retiree Insurance \$2,700,000**
Supports health insurance for our retired clergy and dependents of deceased clergy.

Mission & Service Commitments

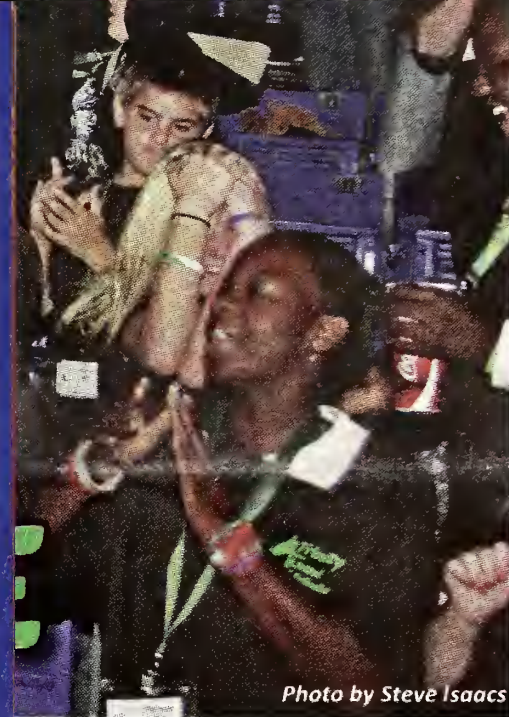


Photo by Steve Isaacs

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Incoming WATS Line	\$4,200
Funding for toll-free WATS line calls to the United Methodist Building in Garner from within the state of North Carolina.	
General & Jurisdictional	
Conferences	\$30,000
Expenses for General and Jurisdictional conferences and funding for electronic balloting costs.	
Conference Connectional Ministries	
Staff Salaries and Benefits ..	\$1,145,000
Represents a ministry and support staff of 12 persons, their salaries, hospitalization insurance, lay staff pensions, Social Security, travel, etc.	
Local church revitalization, related office, meeting and support expenses, and Conference Connectional Table.....	\$120,250
Foundational support for local church revitalization through consultation, assessment, leadership training for pastors and laity, coaching, and partnership with congregations through various stages of growth. In addition, it provides support for Connectional Table meetings for visioning, planning, and evaluation.	

**Total NCC
Connectional Ministries
\$ 14,081,314**

**Total World Service
and NC Conference
Connectional Ministries:
\$ 16,095,255**

**“And all the believers lived
in a wonderful harmony...
They...pooled their
resources so that each
person’s need was met.”**

— Acts 2:44-45, The Message

Past Service Liability **

Applies toward the unfunded (pre-1982) pension liability for pastors.

Total \$3,300,000

Africa University **

The development of a United Methodist university in Zimbabwe. This university provides theological and other educational programs on the continent where United Methodism is experiencing its fastest growth.

Total \$60,738

Black College Fund **

This fund supplements operational and capital needs of 10 black colleges, including Bennett College in Greensboro and one medical school, which have provided leadership to the church and nation.

Total \$271,383

Episcopal Fund **

Covers salaries and expenses of active United Methodist bishops and dependents, retired bishops and surviving spouses.

Total \$565,233

Interdenominational Cooperation Fund **

Supports those general church activities which are ecumenical in nature. This is United Methodism in mission with other Christian communities witnessing in the world.

Total \$53,016

**Grand Total
all funds:
\$20,345,625**



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
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Rainbow Covenant Advance Specials

To be a Rainbow Covenant Church, a local church needs to meet the "first mile" by paying in full apportionments as set by Annual Conference. Then each local church is asked to support at least one project in each of the five lanes of the Rainbow Covenant.

Each lane reminds the local church that it has touched persons with the love of God in its own community, in the broader areas of the Conference, on a national level, and throughout the world.

Rainbow Covenant Lanes

The lanes have been slightly reorganized this year so that churches can better connect persons in mission and the projects with which they are involved. The lanes are:

- Lane One:** Persons in Mission *
- Lane Two:** Conference Advances
- Lane Three:** National Missions
- Lane Four:** World Missions
- Lane Five:** UMCOR

Persons in Mission *

In Lane One are persons in mission supported by the NC Conference and the General Board of Global Ministries. They serve on the ground throughout the world and are the hands and feet of Christ. Some of them work locally in this conference area. Others work in other parts of the nation. Still others work in other countries. All have valid ministries and all have valid needs.

Local churches are encouraged to be involved with the various missionaries that the NC Conference supports. Several persons in mission are not commissioned missionaries through the General Board of Global Mission; yet they still need funds to advance their ministry. (These persons are designated with "S" in their identification code which shows that they are a part of a Conference Advance). For more information about the GBGM missionaries, go to the website: www.gb-gm-umc.org/missionaries. All persons in missions appreciate prayers, cards, letters and emails.

Contact information is on the GBGM website.

Covenant Relationships

All gifts and contributions share the love of Jesus Christ by supporting missionaries who work to offer hope and alleviate human suffering. Generous one-time gifts make this service possible. Congregations and individuals are also encouraged to support missionaries through Covenant Relationships.

The standard covenant relationship for a local church to support a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionary is \$2500 annually or \$5 per church member per year. However, this partnership is much more than a financial commitment. It is a dynamic relationship where the church and missionary pray for one another and communicate regularly. By deepening its own awareness of the struggles and triumphs of the missionary, congregations participate in a work that is truly connectional.

To learn more about covenant relationships, contact the Conference Missions Team Secretary, Bill Haddock (revbillh@nccumc.org) or <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/advance/missionaries/covenant/>

Advance Specials

GBGM ADVANCE for Christ projects are General Advance Specials. There are also Conference Advance Specials approved by the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Both types of Advance Specials are assigned numbers which should be recorded on the remittance sheets turned into the Conference Treasurer with the contribution check. Remittances for General Advance Specials can also be made on-line at the General Board of Global Ministries website at www.gb-gm-umc.org. Contact the Conference Treasurer to make electronic transfers to that office.

At the end of the fiscal year, please fill out the form at the end of this section and send it to

Rainbow Covenant



Photo by Steve Isaacs

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the District Mission Secretary who will issue the Rainbow Covenant Form to the participating local churches. Remember that all remittances need to be sent to the Conference Treasurer or to the General Board of Global Ministries, not to the district secretaries.

This list is not inclusive: any missionary or any ADVANCE Special can be supported by local churches or individuals. The Conference Missions website, at <http://nccumc.org/missions/> has a number of ADVANCE specials that local churches and individuals support.

Lane 1: Persons in Mission

The NCC Missions Team recommends Salary Support for the following missionaries. Each missionary listed below serves with one or more projects denoted in the paragraph following the missionary's name.

MOZART ADEVU (#13996Z) West Africa

Mozart is a GBGM missionary serving as the Africa Regional Coordinator for the sustainable Agriculture and Development Program for UMCOR. He focuses on training farmers in Liberia. He currently serves as Chair of the Moringa Association of Ghana which promotes the nutritional properties of Moringa and has spearheaded the development of the first ever standards on the production and processing of Moringa. Contact information—Email: madevu1201@yahoo.com

Related Lane 4: World Missions

Tractors for Missions Stations #S-00229
Support for Agricultural Self-Sustainability #S-00232
Purchase of Tools #S00233
Sustainable Agriculture and Development #982188

WIL BAILEY (#S-00140) San Isidro,

Costa Rica An SEJ/Conference Missionary, Wil is responsible for working with local pastors in the southern zone of Costa Rica

and organizes the projects at the Methodist churches in that area for U.S. work teams. He also teaches Theology, Bible and English at the extension campus of the Methodist seminary in San Isidro. Contact information—Email: jwilb4@yahoo.com Web: www.costaricamissionprojects.com

LYNN & SHARON FOGLEMAN (#773720)

Kentucky Drs. Lynn and Sharon Fogleman are Associates in Mission Service (AIMS) missionaries serving with the General Board of Global Ministries at the Red Bird Clinic in Beverly, Kentucky. Contact information—Email: rbm@rbmission.org Web: rbmission.org

Related Lane 3: National Missions

Red Bird Clinic #773724

SHANA HARRISON (#13089Z) Chile

Shana is serving as the Executive Director of Crescendo, a non-profit organization that promotes autonomy and self development of adults who have intellectual disabilities through protected spaces such as a workshop and group home. Crescendo strives to assist the adults in developing the tools necessary to live truly integrated in society and accompanies the families of adults who have intellectual disabilities in understanding and experiencing the adult life of their family members.

Contact information—Email: sdhchile2003@yahoo.com Web: www.crescendo.cl

Related Lane 4: World Missions

John Wesley School for Persons with Disabling Conditions #12035A
La Esperanza: Sheltered Workshop and Group Home #14056A

BUTCH HUFFMAN (#S-00192) NCC

An NC Conference Missionary, Butch engages, encourages and recruits congregations for mission work-team participation. He works with churches to equip them with the “how-to’s” of doing local and foreign mission work teams. Contact information—Phone: 919-931-4304 Email: butchhuffman@bydasea.net

Related Lane 2: Conference Missions

MERCI Mission Center #S-00316
UMVIM Work Teams #S-00021



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Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
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Persons in Mission

GREG JENKS (#S-00148) ZOE Ministry, Sub-Sahara, Africa

An NC Conference Missionary, Greg is serving in North Carolina working with the people of Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and other areas of sub-Sahara Africa for the purpose of developing a comprehensive ministry in response to the AIDS pandemic; with a primary focus in the care of HIV orphans. The foci include establishing children's empowerment ministries, feeding programs, providing school fees and uniforms, and meeting spiritual needs of the children. Contact information—Phone: 800-951-0234 Email: greg@zoeministry.org Web: <http://www.zoeministry.org/>

Related Lane 4: World Missions
ZOE Ministry #982023

FRIDO KINKOLENGE (#15152Z) Liberia

A Methodist originally from the Congo, Frido has been working with the people of Liberia since 2004. He has started several extraordinary programs that are powerful and constructive like the Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center and Feed My Lambs. These programs support ex-combatants and street children and feeding/literacy training. Contact information—Email: c_0102538@yahoo.com Web: <http://liberia.nccumc.net/>

Related Lane 4: World Missions

Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center #3020790
Feed My Lambs #S-00179

FAITH LAMPHIER (#S-00187) India & Africa

An SEJ/Conference Missionary, Faith serves with A Work of Heart. This program shares God's love through hands-on classes in sewing, cooking, and handcrafts. The skills learned provide an opportunity for the girls and women to gain self-confidence and often increase the family income. Contact information—Email: faith_onthego@yahoo.com

GARY WAYNE LOCKLEAR (#982955)

Rockingham District, NC A Church and Community Worker, Gary is assigned to the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry with the NC Conference. His main goal is to grow the Native American churches and leadership in the coming years and to explore the possibility of developing congregations in all Native American communities in the Conference. Contact information—Phone: 910-522-0670 Email: Glocklear1@intrstar.net Web: www.nativeamericanministries.org

Related Lane 3: National Missions

Rockingham District Native-American
Cooperative Ministries #791001
Native American Comprehensive Plan #982615
SEJ Association of Native American
Ministries--#791842

DAVID MARKAY (#12192Z) Milan, Italy

David is assigned to the Methodist Churches in the northern Italian cities of Milan and Novara, whose missional emphasis is

Continued on page 14

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The opportunity to explore the common ministry in bridging church and world by this of servants is a hallmark that will continue with each participant in their own unique ministry.

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(L-R) Don Metzger and Mack Parker

DAVID MARKAY *continued from page 13*

“Offering hospitality to the stranger/ Being the church together.” As pastor to these largely immigrant congregations, he offers ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental ministry and administrative oversight. Contact information—Email: markay@fastwebnet.it

KRISTIN MARKAY (#12193Z) Milan, Italy Kristin is assigned to the Methodist Churches in the northern Italian cities of Milan and Novara, whose missional emphasis is “Offering hospitality to the stranger/Being the church together.” As pastor to these largely immigrant congregations, she offers ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental ministry and administrative oversight. Contact information—Email: markay@fastwebnet.it

MELBA McCALLUM (#S-00195) Rockingham District, NC Salary support for Dr. McCallum, who serves as the Director of the Rockingham District Partners in Ministry. She partners with youth, young adults, families, and the church to help build and mobilize capacity within the district through “hands-on” ministry. Contact information—Phone: 910-206-2686 Web: RDPIM.org Email: mdgmccallum@yahoo.com

NARA MELKONYAN (#S-00004) Armenia Nara is the Director of Project AGAPE. She coordinates ministry and relief efforts at Project AGAPE in Armenia. Contact information—Email: nmelkonyan@yahoo.com Web: http://nccumc.org/missions/projects/overseas/project-agape/

Related Lane 4: World Missions
Project AGAPE, Armenia #S-00004

ROSANNA PANIZO-VALLADARES (#3019710) Durham, NC Rosanna reaches out to Hispanic/Latino families, providing access to public services, advocacy, immigration, translation, pastoral care, food ministry, educational workshops for

parents and after-school programs. Contact information—Phone: 919-317-8700 Email: rpanizo@nccumc.org

Related Lane 2: Conference Missions
Durham District Board of Mission #S-00202

Related Lane 3: National Missions
National Hispanic Ministries Challenge Fund #982620

VICKIE SIGMON (#982916) Winston-Salem, NC A Church and Community Worker, Vickie works in a high-risk community developing Christian community, promoting social justice and proclaiming God’s loving presence. Contact information—Phone: 336-724-0850 Email: openarmsumc@juno.com

Related Lane 3: National Missions
Open Arms Ministry #982916

VICTOR TARYOR (#3019571) Liberia Victor is a hospital administrator for Ganta Hospital. Also a registered nurse, Victor oversees the daily operation of the hospital which provides the best possible care to each patient. Contact information—Email: vdoolakehtaryor@yahoo.com

Related Lane 4: World Missions
Ganta United Methodist Hospital #15080N

MARY ZIGBUO (#10721Z) Liberia Mary helps the church to develop a program that addresses the physical, educational, and spiritual needs of disabled populations. Contact information—Email: umcliberia@yahoo.com.

Related Lane 4: World Missions
Young Women Vocational Training and Empowerment Project #3020647
Ganta United Methodist Mission Station #14369T
General Health Program and Ministry #3020622

Any other advance specials which are listed in “Strength in Numbers” www.advancinghope.org.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
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Lane 2

NC Conference Advance Specials

Children & Youth Ministries
Recovery and Relief Efforts
Ethnic Populations in the US
Hunger Relief
Institutional Programs

All God's Children UMC (#S-08004)	†	†	†		
Alliance Medical Ministry (S-00142)			†		
Caswell County Parish, Inc. (#S-00008)		†	†	†	
Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry (S-00008)	†		†		†
Ethnic Local Church Projects in the Rockingham District (#S-00022)	†	†	†		
Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC (#S-00025)		†		†	
Golden Cross (#S-00153)		†	†		
Hispanic Ministries (#S-00107)	†		†		
Hyde County Cooperative Parish (#S-00104)		†		†	†
ISA Grant Scholarship (#S-00033)		†			
Jerusalem Arc (#S-00196)	†	†			
MERCI Center (#S-00136)		†	†	†	†
Mission to Haiti (#S-00122)	†	†		†	
NC Conference Disaster Appeals (#S-00096)		†		†	
NC Council of Churches (#S-00051)					†
NC Interfaith Disaster Response (#S-00108)		†			†
NC Storms Emergency Response (#S-00176)		†			†
No Hungry Neighbors (#S-00123)		†	†	†	
The Peace (#S-00183) Parenting & Marriage Enrichment	†		†		†
Prison MATCH - Mothers & Their Children (#S-00054)	†		†		†
Robeson County Church and Community Center (also a GBGM ADVANCE #791742)	†	†	†	†	†
Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministries (#S-00143) and GBGM ADVANCE (#791001)	†	†	†		†
Rockingham District Partners in Ministry (#S-00193)	†	†	†		†
Ryan Epps Home for Children (#S-00245)	†	†		†	†
Society of St. Andrew (NC Office) (#S-00081 and GBGM ADVANCE #801600)	†	†		†	†
Stop Hunger Now (#S-00101)	†	†	†	†	†
UM Volunteers in Mission Work Teams (#S-00021)	†	†			†
Wesley Heritage Project (#S-00097)			†		†
Yokefellow Prison Ministries (#S-00078)			†		†
Youth Service Fund (YSF) (#S-00082)	†		†		†

NC Conference Advance Specials



Photo by Steve Isaacs

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ALL GOD'S CHILDREN UMC (#S-08004)

This ministry develops programs to meet the needs of impoverished children and youth in rural Bertie, Hertford and Northampton counties. Contact—Web: www.allgodschildrenumc.org Phone: 252-345-1077

ALLIANCE MEDICAL MINISTRY

(#S-00142) This ministry was founded to provide affordable primary medical care to low-income, uninsured, working families in Wake County. They serve the working poor, families generally earning less than \$25,000 annually, who have no health insurance. Contact—Phone: 919-250-9154 Web: www.alliancemedicalministry.org

CASWELL COUNTY PARISH, INC.

(#S-00008) Sponsored by local member churches, ministry provides services to impoverished and low-income residents of Caswell County through Two Hearts Thrift Store and clothing ministry, emergency food pantry and utility assistance program. Mission is to be a cooperative ministry working to end poverty in Caswell County. Contact—Deborah Jones. Phone: 336-694-6428 Email: program@caswellparish.org

DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH MINISTRY

(#S-00103) A collaborative ministry of the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences of the UMC. DBOM promotes DISCIPLE Bible Studies in churches and manages the outreach of DISCIPLE in Prisons and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP in Youth Development Centers. DBOM stated mission is the following: “to develop and strengthen Bible Study ministries in local churches and in outreach settings—especially prisons—which will transform lives, make disciples, and empower Christians for outreach ministry.” Contact—Dr. Mark Hicks. Phone: (336)454-5348 Email: MCHicks@northstate.net Web: www.disciplebibleoutreach.org

ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH PROJECTS IN ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT (#S-00022)

Funds assist ethnic churches with crucial needs. Contact—Phone: (910) 276-6641

FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN NC (#S-00025)

Provides food to 545,000 individuals in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina through more than 800 partner agencies including community-based, emergency feeding programs including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, elderly nutrition programs and after school programs for children. Contact—Phone: 919-875-0707 Web: www.foodbankcenc.org

GOLDEN CROSS (#S-00153)

Ministry that reaches out in love to the laity in the NC Conference who are experiencing financial difficulty due to excessive medical expenses. Contact—Phone: 1-800-849-4433 Web: www.nccumc.org/missions/golden-cross

HISPANIC MINISTRIES (#S-00107)

Ministry to the fast growing Hispanic population in North Carolina. These funds will be administered by the North Carolina Conference Hispanic Ministry Team to support an increasing number of congregations who are developing ministry to Hispanics.

HYDE COUNTY COOPERATIVE PARISH

(#S-00104) Provides meals to the needy, recreation and other opportunities for youth, food pantry and clothes closet, transportation for elderly and those needing medical care, ministry to inmates at the Hyde Correctional Facility, drug prevention awareness, assistance to abused persons and Hispanic ministry. Contact—Phone: (252) 926-0104

ISA GRANT SCHOLARSHIP (#S-00033)

The ISA Grant Scholarship Fund is designed to assist persons for whom the expense of participating in a mission team is prohibitive. Priority is given to youth 21 years of age and younger and will not exceed \$250. As ISA Grant Funds are limited, scholarship recipients are encouraged to assist in the replenishment of the fund. Contact—Bill Gross Email: bgross@windstream.net

JERUSALEM ARC (#S-00196)

Leadership development and Christian Education for

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 155, No. 11

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
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Palestinian Christian youth and young adults in Palestine and Jerusalem.
Contact—The Rev. Harold Salmon
Email: revfish@ncrbiz.com

MERCI CENTER (#S-00136) MERCI Center is a volunteer-driven ministry whose focus is providing mission and ministry resources and opportunities to the NC Conference and beyond. Through their affiliation with UMCOR and other relief agencies, MERCI Center serves as a natural disaster relief hub to provide aid to the survivors of social, economic and spiritual disaster.
Contact—Phone: 1-888-440-9167
Web: www.merciumc.org

NC COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (#S-00051) Gives witness to the unity that God has given through Christ to the churches in NC. It is an instrument for cooperative study and action, especially on matters of justice; child and family advocacy; violence against women; public policy advocacy; rural crisis and farm workers advocacy; disaster relief; criminal justice; workplace safety; peace-making; AIDS ministry; and Christian unity.
Contact—Phone: 919-828-6501

NC INTERFAITH DISASTER RESPONSE (#S-00108) The North Carolina Interfaith Disaster Response (NCIDR) assists their efforts before, during and after a disaster occurs. Emphasis is on long term relief, and supporting the administration of all interfaith organizations working with disaster relief and recovery. Contact—Phone: 919-510-9193 Web: www.ncidr.org/index.html

NC STORMS EMERGENCY RESPONSE (#S-00176) Sometimes typical methods of disaster response financing for storm-related emergencies are inadequate. In these situations, special area/conference appeals are issued for costs related to mitigating the disaster – direct support to affected families and costs in delivering assistance. This is the only situation in which UMCOR can address the issues of church property in disasters. Contact—Steve Taylor Phone: 800-849-4433, ext. 257 Email: staylor@nccumc.org

NO HUNGRY NEIGHBORS (#S-00123)

A ministry of increasing awareness, and eliminating hunger in North Carolina by raising funds for our regional food banks and the Society of St. Andrew, and engaging in hands-on ways to alleviate hunger in our community. Phone: 1-800-849-4433
Web: <http://nccumc.org/missions>

THE PEACE (#S-00183) This ministry develops programs focusing on marriage, family, children and parenting/teaching issues within churches and schools in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, marriage, family, and parenting can be approached as important spiritual disciplines contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of couples, families, children, youth and parents/teachers. Contact—Mike Hale. Phone: 910-425-3790 Email: mhale@nccumc.org Web: <http://thepeaceinc.org>

PRISON MATCH—Mothers And Their Children (#S-00054) An interfaith program provides mothers and their children with the support and resources necessary to maintain and strengthen family relationships and to help break the cycle of children following their parents to prison. Contact—Phone: 919-828-4767 Email: director@prisonmatch.org Web: www.prisonmatch.org

ROBESON COUNTY CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER, Lumberton (#791742) An ecumenical ministry in a multicultural community which is designed to help local churches meet emergency needs, literacy tutoring for children and adults, home repairs and building new homes. Speakers are available upon request. Contact—Phone: 910-738-5204 Web: robesonchurchandcommunitycenter.org.

ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES - "EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY" (#S-00143) (#791001). Provides ministry support, collaboration among the 14 Native American United Methodist Churches, leadership

NC Conference Advance Specials

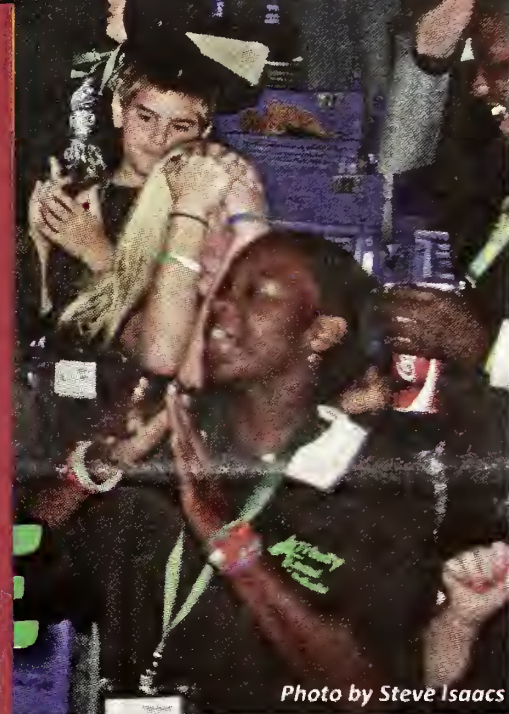


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development, gifts exploration and missional opportunities. Contact—Gary Locklear. Phone: 910-522-0670 Email: glocklear1@intrstar.net Web: http://www.nativeamericanministries.org/cooperative_ministry/

ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT PARTNERS IN MINISTRY (#S-00193) Partners with local church congregations and communities to help alleviate poverty in the Rockingham District through hands-on outreach ministry with the poor and marginalized. Contact—Dr. Melba McCallum. Email: mdgmccallum@yahoo.com Phone: 910-206-2686 Web: <http://rdpim.org>

RYAN EPPS HOME FOR CHILDREN (#S-00245) Located in Haiti. Provides food, clothing, and shelter for needy children and offers educational and spiritual growth opportunities. A school will serve 180 children from the surrounding community and the church will have a capacity of 170 people. Contact—Phone: 919-553-4572 Email: questions@ryanepphome.com Web: www.ryanepphome.com

SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW, NC OFFICE, Durham (#S-00081 NC Advance) (#801600 National Advance) This is an ecumenical ministry dedicated to providing hunger-relief across our state through gleaning- the salvaging of surplus produce from farms and packing houses. They also work to elevate awareness about the problem of hunger and engage people in understanding how they can be part of the solution. Through the Seed Potato Project, Potato & Product and the NC office, 8-10 million of pounds of produce is saved and distributed in North Carolina each year. Phone: 1-866-453-2662 Email: ncglean@endhunger.org Web: www.endhunger.org/north_carolina.htm

STOP HUNGER NOW (#S-00101) SHN is an international hunger relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world. The organization is driven by a vision to end world hunger and a mission to provide food

and life-saving aid to the world's most destitute and hungry in the most sustainable, efficient and effective manner. Contact—Phone: 1-888-501-8440 Email: info@stophungernow.org Web: www.stophungernow.org

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION WORK TEAMS (#S-00021) Provides assistance for Volunteers in Mission work teams from within the NC Conference. Contact—Bill Gross. Phone: 919-498-1660 Email: bgross@windstream.net Web: <http://www.nccumvim.org>

WESLEY HERITAGE PROJECT (#S-00097) Gifts help distribute *Obras de Wesley*, the works of John and Charles Wesley in Spanish. Contact—Mark W. Wethington. Phone: (910) 295-7720 Email: wethmw@mindspring.com

YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRIES (#S-00078) Educates church people concerning Christian responsibility for persons affected by crime and brings Christians into direct service ministries with prison inmates and their families. Contact—Phone: (336) 724-9801 Web: www.yokefellowprisonministry.org

YOUTH SERVICE FUND (#S-00082) Supports mission projects within the annual conference and beyond which have been selected by youth of the NC Conference. Contact—Robin Harry. Email: rharry@nccumc.org Web: <http://nccumc.org/youth/>

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Lane 3 National Missions

NATIONAL HISPANIC MINISTRIES CHALLENGE FUND (#982620)

Provides assistance to Annual Conferences developing Hispanic Ministries, especially in the areas of leadership recruitment and development, financial resources and printed resources. Contact—Rosanna Panizo-Valladares Phone: 919-317-8700 Email: rpanizo@nccumc.org

THE NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY (#982001)

A faith-based ministry dedicated to migrant farm workers: the men, women, and children who labor in the fields to harvest our fruits and vegetables. NFWM educates and raises awareness in congregations and church groups about the decade-long struggle of migrant farm workers and their families. The ministry encourages congregations to put their faith into action to support farm workers as they organize for justice, empowerment and equality. Contact—CCW Missionary, Alexandria Jones. Phone: 919-489-4485 Email: nc@nfwf.org Web: www.nfwf.org/northcarolina

HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER, Hayesville, NC (#731372)

A retreat center offering rest and renewal. The center staff provides training and development for churches in town and rural settings. Contact—Lyle Shipley. Phone: 828-389-8336 Email: info@hintoncenter.org Web: http://www.hintoncenter.org

NATIVE AMERICAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (#982615)

Supports leadership development, new church starts, and discipleship formation in the Native American community. Contact—The Rev. Anita Phillips. Phone: 918-686-8444 Email: nacomp@prodigy.net Web: http://www.gbod.org/nativeamerican/

SEJ AGENCY OF NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES, Lake Junaluska, NC (#791842)

Helps meet the needs of 130,000+ Native Americans living in the 17 annual conferences of the Southeast. Contact—The Rev. Jeff Ramsland. Phone: 828-454-6724 Web: www.sejumc.org/sejanam/

RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, Beverly, Kentucky (#773978)

The conference program facilitates the development of local churches and local lay leaders in isolated rural mountain communities. Contact—Phone: 606-598-5915 Email: info@redbirdconference.org Web: http://www.redbirdconference.org/

Any other advance specials which are listed in "Strength in Numbers" www.advancinghope.org.

National Missions

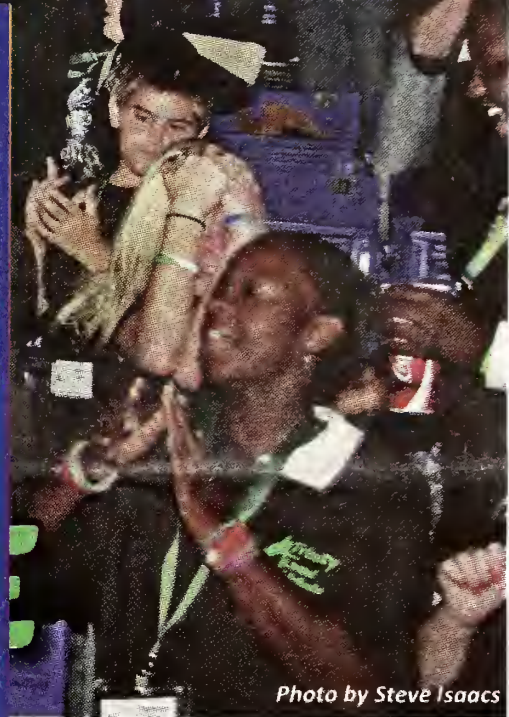


Photo by Steve Isaacs

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World Missions

Lane 4 World Missions

BREAD FOR THE WORLD (#982325)

Collective Christian voice urging US decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. They provide policy analysis and strategies to end hunger as well as education for its advocacy network, opinion leaders, policy makers and the public about hunger in the United States and abroad. Contact—Phone: 202-639-9400 Email: bread@bread.org Web: www.bread.org

CRISIS IN DARFUR & SUDAN

ANIMAL LIVESTOCK & BEEKEEPING, Sudan (#3020638) Training farmers in animal husbandry and beekeeping to improve the communities' economy.

EMERGENCY, Sudan (#184385)

Assisting the country through emergency and long-term development projects.

SHALOM MINISTRY, Sudan (#3020787)

Supporting children orphaned by the war and HIV/AIDS.

CRISIS IN HAITI (#418325)

Supports emergency relief and developmental efforts after the devastating earthquake in January 2010.

CROP/CHURCH WORLD SERVICE COMMUNITY HUNGER APPEAL

(#982380) Works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world. Local church CROP events can receive UMCOR credit. Contact—Phone: 574-264-3102 For Forms: 800-297-1516 Email: info@churchworldservice.org Web: www.churchworldservice.org

CURAMERICAS GLOBAL, Bolivia

(#10158A) Provides vaccinations, nutritional monitoring of children, prenatal care, and other preventative health care services. Contact—Jaime Carrillo, MD, MPH. Phone: 919-510-8787 or 877-510-4787 Email: info@curamericas.org Web: http://www.curamericas.org

HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

(#982532) Envisions a world of communities sharing the resources of a healthy planet wherein they provide families a source of food. Their program allows millions of people to share their animals' offspring, knowledge, resources and skills with others in order to expand and create a network of hope, dignity and self reliance that reaches 128 countries. Contact—Phone: 800-422-0474 Email: info@heifer.org Web: www.heifer.org

LOVE FOR LIBERIA FUND, Liberia A two-year focus beginning in 2011 of missional action, prayer, and giving for United Methodist ministries in Liberia.

General Love for Liberia Fund	#S-00221
Work Team Support	#S-00222
Provision of School Books	#S-00223
Bibles for Children and Students	#S-00224
Laptop/Computer Ministry	#S-00225
Scholarships for College	#S-00226
Scholarships for Seminary	#S-00227
Scholarships for Primary Education	#S-00228
Purchase of Tractors for Mission Stations	#S-00229
Provision of Medications	#S-00230

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LOVE FOR LIBERIA FUND *continued*

Funds for shipping	#S-00231
Support Agricultural Self Sustainability	#S-00232
Purchase of Tools	#S-00233
Provision of Building Materials	#S-00234
Food Provision Ministry for Children	#S-00235
Purchase of Skills Development Supplies	#S-00236
Provision of Fuel for Generators	#S-00237
Vehicles for Pastors/DSs/ Mission Workers	#S-00238

Ganta United Methodist Mission Station #14369T
Rebuilding mission station buildings and infrastructure destroyed in the war.

Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center #3020790
Supports ex-combatants and provides vocational/literacy training and feeding.

Feed My Lambs #S-00179
Supports street children, and feeding/literacy training.

Sustainable Agriculture and Development #S-00180
Creating technologically appropriate practices and Farmer Field Schools.

PERU COVENANT TEAM, Peru

Funds received for this project will help the NC Conference fulfill a covenant made with the Methodist Church in Peru. Funds may be designated for the following:

General Fund	#S-00053
Children and Youth	#S-00117
Breakfast of Love	#S-00111
Women's Programs	#S-00119
Matched Churches	#S-00112
Building and Work Teams	#S-00113
Leadership Development	#S-00120
Medical Needs	#S-00114

Mission Teams	#S-00121
National Plan for Evangelism	#S-00115
White Plains/North Lima	#S-00173
Christian Education-all ages	#S-00116
Theological Education & Pastoral Formation-Obras de Wesley	#S-00118

PROJECT AGAPE, Armenia (#S-00004)

Relief efforts in Armenia (food, medical supplies, medication); working with the Armenian Church to provide a holistic ministry in pastoral care, education, health care, agriculture and economic development. NC Conference United Methodist Church Contact—Steve Taylor. Phone: 919-779-6115, ext. 257 Email: staylor@nccumc.org

ZOE MINISTRY, Sub-Sahara, Africa (#982023)

This ministry works with the people of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Rwanda to develop a comprehensive ministry in response to the AIDS pandemic; with a primary focus in the care of HIV orphans. The foci include establishing children's empowerment ministries, feeding programs, providing school fees and uniforms, and meeting spiritual needs of the children. Contact—Greg Jenks, NC Conference Missionary. Phone: 800-951-0234 Email: greg@zoeministry.org Web: http://www.zoeministry.org/

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Lane 5

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

Web: www.umcor.org Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org
Phone: 212-870-3552 Volunteer Hotline: 800-918-3100

UMCOR is the global humanitarian aid organization of The United Methodist Church. It works in 80+ countries worldwide, including the US. Their mission is to alleviate human suffering—caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people. They respond to communities that are unable to recover on their own.

How to Give

You may write a check to UMCOR and mail to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087; or, for local church and Annual Conference credit, give to your church for mailing. Please write the Advance number and name in the memo line.

You may pay by credit card:
Call (800) 554-8583

You may give online at: <http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations/advance/index.cfm>

Featured Advance Specials

GLOBAL REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION RESPONSE (#982540) UMCOR responds to initial emergency needs of uprooted people and provides programs through community and/or church based projects that prepare refugees for a productive, self-sustaining life when they can safely return to their own country or resettle in a new home. Contact—Rosanna Panizo-Valladares Email: rpanizo@nccumc.org

INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCIES. When international emergencies arise, UMCOR will assign an advance number for each emergency. Contact—UMCOR Phone: 212-870-3909 Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org Web: www.umcor.org

UMCOR DISASTER RESPONSE

(#901670) UMCOR works in more than 80 countries worldwide, including the United States. Its mission, grounded in the teachings of Jesus, is to alleviate human suffering—whether caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people. UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters that are interruptions of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own. Contact—Volunteer Hotline: 800-918-3100 Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org Web: www.umcor.org

WORLD HUNGER/POVERTY (#982920)

The Global Hunger and Poverty Program is an integral part of UMCOR's mission to empower the most vulnerable. Global hunger and poverty occurs to more than 800 million people in a world with unparalleled wealth and food production due to lack of accessibility and equal distribution to all people regardless of their class, gender, geography, religion, earning power or status. More information—<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/advance>

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Reporting 2010 Rainbow Covenant Giving

Complete all information on the reverse side of this page for your congregation and return to your District Missions Secretary.

Completing this form ensures that your church will be recognized for its work in missions in the past year.

Remember: To be recognized as a Rainbow Covenant church, churches must pay 100% of all 2010 apportionments and give a contribution in each of the five lanes. The six Special Sunday offerings are not included.

Return this form to the District Missions Secretary by January 31, 2011.

NOTE: Send contributions to the NCC Treasurer's Office. Check with that office for the due dates for Advance and Apportionment remittances.

District Mission Secretaries

Burlington – Rev. Jimmy Wooten
Cedar Cliff UMC, 4683 Cedar Cliff Rd, Graham NC 27253
(336) 376-6321 (o) Email: jwooten@nccumc.org

Durham – Kay Deans
2151 Kittrell Road, Kittrell, NC 27544
(252) 492-0168 (o) Email: kdeans@ncol.net

Elizabeth City – Ed Rutenkroger
409 Taylor Street, Windsor, NC 27983
252-794-9270 (h) Email: erutenkroger@nccumc.org

Fayetteville – Rev. Michael Hale
The PEACE, 4948 Lattimore St., Hope Mills, NC 28348
(910) 987-3753 (o) Email: mhale@nccumc.org

Goldsboro – Mike Whatley
1811 O'Berry Center Road, Goldsboro, NC 27530
(919) 735-9838 (o) Email: mwhatley@earthlink.net

Greenville – Rev. Susan Harrison
114 E. Church Street, Williamston, NC 27892
(252) 792-3360 (o) Email: sharrison@nccumc.org

New Bern – Rev. Connie Stutts
637 Farm Life Avenue, Vanceboro, NC 28586
(252) 671-7143 (c) Email: cstutts@nccumc.org

Raleigh – Rev. Jo Elaine Harris
10621 Silverwood Creek Dr., Raleigh, NC 27614
(919) 787-0544, Ext. 19 (o) Email: joelaine@nccumc.org

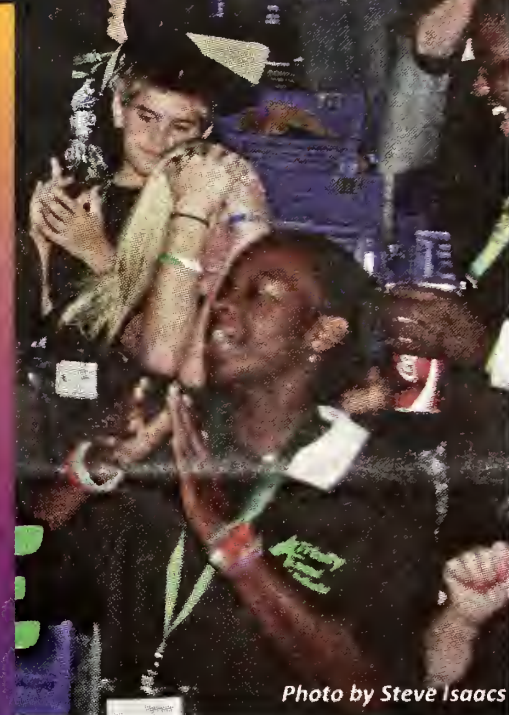
Rockingham – Roberta Foster
PO Box 395, Laurel Hill, NC 28351 (910) 268-4503 (h)

Rocky Mount – Rev. Kris Williams
PO Box 13, Pinetops, NC 27864
(252) 827-4176 (o) Email: kwilliams@nccumc.org

Sanford – Rev. Patricia Sykes
512 Scotland Ave. Rockingham, NC 28379
(910) 974-4454 (o) Email: pssykes@nccumc.org

Wilmington – Rev. Edith Gleaves
6004 Inland Greens Dr., Wilmington, NC 28405
(910) 256-4771 (o) Email: elgleaves@nccumc.org

Rainbow Covenant Reporting



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Rainbow Covenant Form

2010 Rainbow Covenant Form

Church _____

District _____

Church Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Chairperson of Missions/Outreach _____

Name/Phone of Person Completing Form _____

1. Did your church complete the first mile of United Methodist Missions by paying 100% of its 2010 apportionments (World Service & Connectional Ministries, Episcopal Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation, Black Colleges, Africa University Fund and Past Service Liability)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did your church go the second mile by giving to the Advance for missions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, use the table on the right to list projects supported and the amounts given to each (use additional paper if necessary).

Projects supported and amounts given:

Lane 1: Persons in Mission

Lane 2: NC Conference Advance Missions

Lane 3: National Missions

Lane 4: World Missions

Lane 5: UMCOR

2010 Giving and Church Membership Totals

Grand total of all gifts given to the Advance _____

Your church membership at the end of 2010 _____

Per-member giving to the Advance for 2010
(divide grand total by membership) _____

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Conference Media Resource Center

Open to all local churches in the NC Conference, The Walton Memorial Media Center is located in the United Methodist Building in Garner. It has over 2,500 video and printed resources available for checkout. Come to the Center and browse through the available resources or look through the Online Catalog via the web site: <http://nccumc.org/mediacenter/>. If you have questions or need suggestions, contact Laura

Dallas, Director. Resource orders can be completed by phone at 919-779-6115 or 1-800-849-4433, ext. 264 or by e-mail to ldallas@nccumc.org. Resources include materials for teacher training, mission awareness, age level studies, expert-led Bible classes, stewardship programs, and curriculum examples. These and other items are available to preview and for use in ministries of the local church.

Media Resource Center

Be There: UMCOR One Great

Hour of Sharing DVD138

Includes 3 segments: 3-minute inspirational message, 7 minutes of highlights of UMCOR work, and a music video, "We Change the World."

Building Churches, Changing Lives:

The Ten Dollar Club DVD272

Our Conference's own program to help in building new churches celebrates 50 years of ministry. This video describes how the program works and how it has helped many new congregations. 10 mins.

Complete Ministry Audit, The KIT85

Bill Easum's book to help 1) understand your congregation's particular character, 2) diagnose problems and opportunities, 3) plot strategies, and 4) extend your mission into the community. Book with forms and assessments. CDROM with additional printouts and tools.

Curing Affluenza Series DVD258

Tony Campolo leads a series on evaluating our attitudes towards our time, our money and our stuff. Each tape is 20-25 minutes long, with discussion questions following the viewing available in the study guide. 150 mins.

Disciple Bible Outreach DVD89

DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries is reaching out to inmates in prisons all across North Carolina. This video tells the story of this inspiring ministry.

Enough, Discovering Joy Through

Simplicity & Generosity DVD265

Adam Hamilton leads a small group study for rediscovering the Bible's wisdom on "prudent financial practices."

Faithful and Wise: Being a Good

Steward DVD30

All the gifts that God has given us are part of our stewardship responsibilities. The six eight-minute segments of the study with discussion guide, cover how to expand our giving to every facet of our

lives, "including our time, our skills and talents, our physical and spiritual environments, and our money and possessions."

Fundraising When Money Is Tight BK578

A strategic and practical guide to surviving tough times by Mal Warwick.

Good \$ense/Freed-Up Biblical Financial Principles for Transforming

Your Finances & Life KIT50

This program by Dick Towner and John Tofilon "will help the people in your church discover tools and develop skills that enable them to control their finances rather than allowing their finances to control them."

Greening Congregations Handbook .. BK530

A comprehensive handbook for individuals or church groups who want to consider issues of sustainability and conservation in terms of the local church programming and community life. Includes references, form samples, and articles.

Healthy Congregations

in Every Place DVD156

Highlights and introduces the Healthy Congregations program of the Conference. 11 mins.

Leading Edge: How to Increase Giving

in your Church VC606

In this training video, George Barna gives information to help churches learn "how to increase awareness and encourage good stewardship." 60 mins.

Let the Children Give..... BK531

This book is designed to supplement an ongoing ministry with children. It will help to teach them how to use their gifts, talents, and the earth's resources as a way to show their love for God. 124 pgs.

Living for Giving: A Wesleyan View

of Stewardship DVD290

Bishop Kenneth L. Carder explains the spiritual discipline and Wesley traditions concerning stewardship

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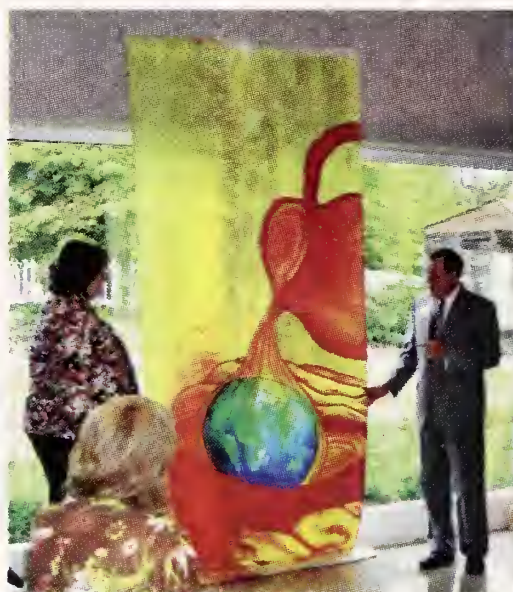
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BELOW RIGHT: “Journey” was the theme of the day apart for the deacons. All who were present for the day were invited to walk a labyrinth set up at St. Francis UMC in Cary for their own discernment and insight and to pray for their fellow deacons in their journeys.



Media Resource Center

Metzger new UMRH

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Metzger attended the University of Missouri earning a BA in civil



(L-R) Don Metzger and Mack Parker

and personal giving. The segments contain instruction and real life scenarios to challenge members of local churches. Divided into 5 sessions: Stewardship as: Christian Discipleship, Sharing in God's Mission, Vocation, Living Simply, and Call to Strategic Generosity.

Living Our Promise:

Trainer's Tool Box DVD195

12 complete training sessions including: Overview for Church Leaders, Welcoming 201-Advanced Role Play, Worship of Welcoming, Stop the Revolving Door, Leading Through Change; and among the video clips, “The Gift.” Leader's book and DVD included.

Living with Money:

Adult Education Program..... KIT30

This program challenges participants to examine money and its use in the context of their Christian faith. It is divided into 4 parts: What is Money? Know Your Money Life, Making Peace with Money, and Balancing Life's Ledger. Leader's guide and example Participant's guide are included. 43 mins.

Material Giving..... VC1626

Shows how to make a difference by sharing simple things such as hygiene and school supplies through UMCOR's material resource ministry. 5 mins.

Money Talks..... VC759

One day during worship, a person puts \$1.00 in the collection plate and it starts to talk back! How the dollars given to the church are used is the rest of this story on video. 20 mins.

Money Talks: 10 Bible-Based Sessions on Making, Saving, and Spending Money..... BK347

“God has much to say about how we get, give, save, and spend money.” A resource for youth workers on what the Bible says about using money wisely. CD includes optional support materials. 144 pgs.

New Beginnings: My Opportunity for Giving: Stewardship as a Way of Life.....KIT49

Paul Wilkes leads this series designed to lead the congregation through an experience of learning, prayer, fellowship, and discernment. All materials are included in the multi-media kit.

New Consecration Sunday:

Stewardship Program..... KIT97

New Consecration Sunday materials teach stewardship from a spiritual rather than a fundraising perspective. What is God calling me to do? Kit includes leader's guide with CD-ROM and an example of a team member manual.

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate BK588

Hearing a young attorney speak of the Faith-based reasons for which he had just made a substantial monetary gift to a community youth center, Cliff Christopher asked the speaker if he would consider making a similar contribution to the congregation of which he was an active member. “Lord no, they wouldn't know what to do with it.” What is the compelling reason for a new generation of members to give to the local church they are connected with?

Pentecost Journey VC1411

Pentecost Journey: A companion video about Hispanic ministries helps congregations learn about stereotypes and provides models of ministry that have been successful in helping churches and communities grow and minister in the name of Jesus Christ. 93 mins.

Rethink Church DVD273

“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you,” Romans 15:7 NRSV. See how your church can get involved in ‘rethinking’ church.

Rich: Nooma Series..... DVD129

Rob Bell asks questions about wealth: “Maybe what we have is enough... maybe God has blessed us... so we can bless and give to others.”

Questions of Faith V, Tape 2:

Whose Money Is It?..... VC1346

The panel discusses the following questions: Why is it hard for us to talk about money? What does your faith have to do with your money? How can we be faithful in a consumer society? 19 mins.

Sharing God's Gifts: NCC 2004 DVD103

Apportionments translate into Mission and Ministries, an overview of the work being done in The United Methodist Church and featuring our North Carolina Conference. 7 mins.

Simply Enough DVD185

Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne team-up to lead sessions on simple and just living. Choices about food, clothing, money, accountability and more, are covered in 7 sessions.

Supporting Leadership for Life..... VC1510

Adults: The Black College Fund: Students and graduates emphasize the importance of educating students for a lifetime of sharing. Includes four 60-90 second vignettes. Use for worship or leadership training. 8 mins.

Thinking Theologically about Money ..BK406

A small group study for youth, this resource explores negative and positive effects on



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
Dr. Ben Hancock named fourth president of MU	10
January 2011 Bible Study	12-13
Christmas Reflections	16

PILGRIMAGE 2010

money, attitudes towards persons based on financial resources, the reality of check and credit card debt, what is tithing and more. 6-sessions, 44 pgs.

Transformed Giving: Realizing Your Church's Full Stewardship PotentialKIT63

A 40 day, six week church-wide study by John Ed Mathison, with DVD and supporting materials to encourage spiritual growth and commitment.

Upside Living in a Downside Economy..... DVD270

A four-week video based study for small groups concerned with financial health based on biblical principles and money management practices led by Mike Slaughter.

Wesley on Giving..... VC1202

This video, book, and leader's guide were developed as a resource for clergy study groups; but can be adapted for use by congregational studies. The three sessions are: On Wealth, Rules for the Use of Wealth, and Fundamentals of Giving. Includes Bishop Ken Carder's study paper, "Giving from a Wesleyan Perspective." 24 mins.

The Widow's Mite..... VC1757

"At the heart, generosity involves letting go of possessions or of oneself." Joyful giving is a mystery to one woman who must learn it from an unlikely source.

Wonders of Wellness..... DVD271

Study guide available for this program showing transforming taking place in 4 local churches in the NC Conference. Risk-taking Ministry, Intentional Spiritual Formation, Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship.

Additional Resources

Resources by Phone & Email

UM Communications:
Techshop, Customer Service, EcuFilm
Video Sales, Special Sunday Materials
1.888.346.3862

Curric-U-Phone, UM Publishing House
1.800.251.8591

Rethink Church: 1.877.281.6535
Email: rethinkchurch@umcom.org

InfoServ - Official information resource
for all questions regarding The United
Methodist Church worldwide.
Email: infoserv@umcom.org

Lake Junaluska Assembly
1.704.452.2881 or 1.800.222.4930

General Board of Global Ministries
Mission Resource Center:
1.800.305.9857

Internet Resources

NC Conference: www.nccumc.org

NC Conference Treasurer
www.nccumc.org/treasurer

NCC Christian Advocate
www.nccumc.org/advocate/

The United Methodist Church
www.umc.org
www.umcsgiving.org

General Board of Global Ministries
www.gbgm-umc.org

Rethink Church
www.umcom.org/rethinkchurch

Center for Christian Stewardship
www.gbod.org/stewardship

Additional Resources



Photo by Steve Isaacs

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sphere. Jay Locklear of St. Luke UMC in Sanford and the Rev. Adam Fenton Seate of St. Luke UMC in Goldsboro led the worship services with a group of youth from various churches across the conference that made up the talented Pilgrimage House Band. "I want everyone to

See "Pilgrimage," page 2

report: Reform lize denomination

discussed Nov. 3-4 at the Council of Bishops' meeting in Panama City.

"We must reduce the perceived distance between the general Church (including the general agencies), the annual conferences, and local congregations," the report said. "We must refashion and strengthen our approaches in leadership development, deployment, and supervision. ...In short, we must change our mind set so that our primary focus and

See "Call to Action," page 6

“Unity in the Journey” is theme of Order of Deacon gathering

By Tammie Grimm *

On Sept. 30 the Order of the Deacon of the NCCUMC met in Cary at St. Francis UMC for their annual day apart. “Unity in the Journey” was the theme that held the various activities of worship, Eucharist, contemplative practices and fellowship together in a retreat like setting.

Organized and inspired under the leadership of Judy Stephens and Alice Kunka, the deacons were joined by a few elders, including Bishop Al Gwinn, who celebrated the Eucharist. During the day, reflections were held on the biblical roots and the historical heritage of the diakonia, the servant leader ministry of the church, as a way to understand deacons present participation within it.

The gift of a banner depicting the servant ministry of the deacon poured out onto the world was presented to Bishop Gwinn on behalf of the order to hang in the new conference building. The banner was procured by the NC Order of Deacons after the 2007 “Celebrating Diakonia” an international convocation of Deacons and Diaconal Orders within the UMC. Bishop Gwinn offered to have the banner as a part of Annual Conference.

Opportunities for reflection and contemplation were engaging in *lectio divina*, which is a contemplation of Scripture study; considering the life and ministry of great saints and walking a canvas labyrinth in a multipurpose room. These practices were woven into a day that allowed participants to enjoy the fellowship and conversation of one another as well as the faces of persons seeking commissioning in nearby conferences.

The opportunity to explore the common ministry in bridging church and world by this of servants is a hallmark that will continue with each participant in their own unique ministry.

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Conference Resource Persons

Conference Resource Persons

Would you like to have someone come interpret the conference budget and program and services made possible through outreach giving? Call Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, or Carol Goehring, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization, at 1-800-849-4433 to arrange consultation.

THE UNITED METHODIST BUILDING
Monday-Friday; 8:30AM-4:30PM
Phone: 919-779-6115 or 1-800-849-4433
FAX: 919-773-2308
www.nccumc.org

Unless otherwise noted, persons listed below can be reached at The United Methodist Building.

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(L-R) Don Metzger and Mack Parker

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Treasurer/Business Administrator
treasurer@nccumc.org

Ms. Ivanna Cole, CPA
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Vice President
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Cabinet Representative
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Rev. Jeff Severt

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United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

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919-836-0029

Rev. James G. Mentzer,
Director of Planned Giving
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919-836-0029

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations . . .	4
Love for Liberia: Answering the Call	7-9
Dr. Ben Hancock named fourth president of MU	10
January 2011 Bible Study	12-13
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Photo by Steve Isaacs

By Kasey Thornton *

It's been called a family reunion, a Jesus convention, and a place to recharge spiritual batteries at a time when a teenager's faith sometimes takes a backseat to social/peer pressures, family problems and school-work. Pilgrimage is an event held annually for the youth of the North

Carolina Conference that addresses the cold-weather blues and spiritual lulls that teens tend to experience at this point in the year.

An important focus of Pilgrimage is the intercommunication and fellowship of youth groups in the conference. For one weekend in November, (Nov. 12-14 this year), the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville becomes a safe place for youth to comfortably introduce themselves to people from other churches, districts, and walks of life.

For 2010, there were lines of youth offering "free hugs" in the concourse, youth with bingo sheets getting initials in boxes that said things like "a person from Raleigh District," "a person from small youth group," and "a person sitting to the left of you." Group games like "Llama, llama" and "Ninja" broke out on the floor of the coliseum, starting with five or six people from a single group but growing to involve dozens of youth from several churches and districts.

The sense of community contributed well to the theme for the weekend—With One Voice—which

emphasized the need for young Christians to put aside social boundaries and unite in love and praise. The contagious spirit in Crown Coliseum was driven by the enthusiastic energy of 5,435 persons who made the journey to Fayetteville, from over 250 churches and all 12 districts.

Music was a large contributing factor to the dynamic electric atmo-

sphere. Jay Locklear of St. Luke UMC in Sanford and the Rev. Adam Fenton Seate of St. Luke UMC in Goldsboro led the worship services with a group of youth from various churches across the conference that made up the talented Pilgrimage House Band. "I want everyone to

See "Pilgrimage," page 2

Call to Action report: Reform needed revitalize denomination

By Heather Hahn *

The United Methodist Church needs to institute widespread reforms — from consolidating general church agencies to holding bishops and clergy accountable for church growth — to revitalize the denomination, a church wide advisory group says.

The Call to Action Steering Team's final report, says the status quo of a shrinking and aging U.S. church is "toxic" and unsustainable.


The report was presented and

discussed Nov. 3-4 at the Council of Bishops' meeting in Panama City.

"We must reduce the perceived distance between the general Church (including the general agencies), the annual conferences, and local congregations," the report said. "We must refashion and strengthen our approaches in leadership development, deployment, and supervision. ...In short, we must change our mind set so that our primary focus and

See "Call to Action," page 6

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Pilgrimage 2010: With One Voice continued from page 1

know that these kids are up on this stage after auditioning and coming to just one rehearsal," Locklear told the crowd. There were backup singers, percussionists, guitar and bass players behind Locklear and Seate as they led the congregation in praise.

The concrete coliseum structure rattled like thunder during a quick-tempo version of "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" that resulted in over 5,000 youth leaping up and down, waving their arms, singing at the top of their lungs.

The song-writing team of Locklear and Seate, composed an original song for Pilgrimage 2010 highlighting the theme. Locklear introduced the chorus to the crowd on Friday night, and many people could be heard singing and humming it in the parking lot long after the worship service was over: "And with one accord, let us rejoice. With one voice, we will sing. With one voice, we will praise Jesus, Messiah, the Ancient of Days. With one voice, we will sing. With one voice, we will shout. Let your spirit fall on us, and we will cry out with one voice."

Emory Anderson, a popular Christian musician, and his group, provided the special music on Saturday night, jumping and leaping and harmonizing on stage to soulful gospel sounds intertwined with an energetic hip-hop style.

"What I love about these kinds of events is that you see so many kinds of praise," Anderson said to



A member of each youth group carried a banner representing their group for the traditional banner processional on the last day of Pilgrimage. Photo by Kasey Thornton

the crowd. "People are up here all weekend singing, testifying, showing DVDs, doing liturgical dance. Our God inhabits that praise... and we're going to send him a message: that all the glory belongs to Him."

Some traditions honored at Pilgrimage 2010 included the rainstorm, the district song ("Deep Down in Our Hearts"), and "Methodist aerobics"—a variation on the hand-jive set to the song "What I Like About You" by

See "Pilgrimage," page 3



Facebook Feedback

Andi: And THIS by FAR in my opinion, was the most amazing year yet. It changed me so much. I loved it.

Kasey: "With one voice we will sing. With one voice we will praise, Jesus, Messiah, the Ancient of Days. With one voice we will sing. With one voice we will SHOUT. Let your spirit fall on us. And we will cry out. With one voice...Ba Ba Ba Baaa":)

Dede: ...Thinks that the churches who chose not to step out of their box and attend Pilgrimage 2010 missed a heck of an opportunity. Thanks to Dennis Peay and others on the planning team who stood firm and courageous in the midst of questions and fear, allowing the Word of God to be broken open for the youth and adults of the NC Conference in an incredibly faithful.

Seth: I learned why "love" is over this glorious weekend of praising God! Thank you Bart Campolo! And I am definitely wish that this weekend would never end! Just remember people: "love your enemies as Jesus loves us all."

Ellen: Pilgrimage 2010 was so amazing, I am speechless.

Richard: Thank you Bart Campolo; you taught me so much. I may not be gay, though if I was, I hope you would speak to me and love me like you do now.

Holly: Just celebrated the gift of Holy Communion with 5,435 friends to wrap up a great weekend.

Mission accomplished

I know there was a lot of conversation about Pilgrimage and Bart Campolo prior to our event. I just want to report that the 28 people of the Pittsboro Circuit, including me, affirm that Bart Campolo was probably the best Pilgrimage worship leader and preacher we have ever had.

Our youth said, "He was straight up and told it just like it is and that's what we need to hear." When one of our youth said that she did not agree with everything he said, but that she thought he made a good case for his beliefs" I reminded her that he did not come to give us answers, but to make us think, another youth responded, "Mission Accomplished!"

I am so glad that the planning committee did not rescind the invitation. This was one of the best weekends our youth group has ever had! Blessings on the planning team for the work you did and what you will continue to do.

Mission Accomplished! Rev. Ray Gooch, Pittsboro Circuit

Opening hearts and minds

I have been a youth leader for many years and have attended numerous PILGRIMAGE events. I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the speaker this year. All of the youth loved him and thought he was very "current" and humorous. Of all the years I have attended, he is by far the most inspirational and interesting. I heard that some groups did not stay for his presentations. I don't understand why anyone would not want to hear what he had to say. He obviously follows the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Thank you so much for allowing him to open hearts and minds this weekend. I am sure he helped many children as well as adults with his message.

Debbie Palladino, Peak UMC, Apex

Bishops support church reforms, accountability

By Heather Hahn *

At their recent meeting in Panama City, Panama, United Methodist bishops unanimously endorsed recommendations for widespread church reforms, including greater accountability for denominational leaders in promoting church growth.

The Council of Bishops' approval of the recommendation in the Call to Action Steering Team Report was heralded as a step forward for a church that has suffered decades of membership decline in the United States. (For information about the Call to Action Report, see page 1.)

More than 80 active and retired bishops at the Council of Bishops gathering discussed the steering team's report.

"What this means is that whatever goes forward, the council is committing itself—and hopefully the Connectional Table will make the same commitment—that yes, we are taking a stand and these are the levers to pull the church in the

direction in which we feel the Spirit of God is calling us," said Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, the steering team co-chair. "And that is toward more congregational vitality."

Some of the recommendations will require the approval of General



NC Conference Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. requests a vote on the Call to Action Steering Team's recommendations.

Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body. The bishops also supported the creation of an interim operations team, which will be responsible for helping to draft any legislation that will be required.

Drivers of vitality

The Call to Action team based its recommendations on two studies it commissioned from independent researchers. One was an "Operational Assessment of the Connectional Church" that found the church was undergoing a "creeping crisis of relevance" and rated general agencies below average in fulfilling the church's mission.

Another study, "The Vital Congregations Research Project," analyzed data from 32,228 United Methodist churches in the United States and classified 4,961 congregations, or 15 percent, as "high-vital" local churches. The study found that four key drivers of congregational vitality in the United States are effective pastoral leadership, multiple small

groups, diverse worship styles and a high percentage of spiritually engaged laity in leadership roles.

Fred Miller, a consultant who helped coach the Call to Action Steering Team, said the finding gets beyond the debates between theological liberals and theological conservatives that have long divided the church.

"In the U.S., we have this struggle for dominance between liberals and conservatives," Miller told the bishops. "The research says that (the theological orientation) doesn't make a difference for having vital congregations. The research says that's that not how we draw confessions of faith."

Greater accountability

The studies had a U.S. focus, and some bishops questioned whether the drivers of vitality would be as effective outside the United States. Still, many of the bishops from

See "Bishops support," page 6

Pilgrimage 2010: With One Voice continued from page 2

the Romantics.

Something unique to Pilgrimage 2010 was an international video conference with two Kenyan orphans named Titus and Demarius. Guided by Greg Jenks, executive director of ZOE Ministry, the two spoke directly to the 5,000 youth on how ZOE has helped them become self-sufficient in overcoming poverty and hardship.

Other religious organizations and Methodist-related colleges also had representatives in the concourse to speak with interested youth.

The speaker for the weekend was Bart Campolo, a minister of urban youth in Ohio with a reputation for "being real" with young people. His energetic style, personal anecdotes and explanation of Jesus as a social radical provided the backbone for an overarching message of unconditional Christian love. By the end

of the weekend, that kind of love became known as "mad, crazy love."

"I'm not going to stand here and tell you that God loves you. You know that, or you've at least heard it all your lives. What I'm here to say is that God is wildly, desperately, passionately IN love with you. He's crazy about you. He adores you, and He wants to transform you into a passionate lover, just like Him."

Campolo touched on topics that are the realities of youth everywhere—suicide, loneliness, homosexuality, addiction—and encouraged his listeners to love others past their faults, most especially the people existing on social margins. Each of Campolo's messages was well-received and drew standing ovations from the youth.

The Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry was presented to Greater Heights UMC of Clayton (Goldsboro



North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church

2010
Award of Excellence
In
Youth Ministry



Greater Heights UMC of Clayton

The Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry was presented to Greater Heights UMC of Clayton (Goldsboro District). Photo by Kasey Thornton

district) by conference youth president, Sidney Evans. Twenty-three churches and two districts were recognized for giving to the Youth Service Fund.

Over 500 youth dedicated Saturday afternoon to Stop Hunger Now, an international hunger relief endeavor, by raising \$7,541 and packing over 27,000 meals. A portion of the Sunday offering was designated to ship the meals to poverty-stricken areas of the world.

Through music, laughter, mission work and messages of unconditional Christian love, the re-energized

youth and adults who exited the coliseum on Sunday afternoon were nearly unrecognizable from the ones who packed their bags and vans two days earlier.

Pilgrimage 2010, along with the many other events held by the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church for young people, is undeniable and tangible proof that the youth ministry is thriving and growing, alive and well.

* Kasey Thornton is a student at Elon University and a member of Wendell UMC (Raleigh District).



Youth from Macedonia UMC of Cary (Raleigh District) offered entertainment during the gathering which had over 5400 in attendance.

Ministry Study Commission presents recommendations

By Vicki Brown *

The Study of Ministry Commission has mapped out changes that include a shift away from security of employment for elders, a move to group candidacy mentoring, and separating ordination from full annual conference membership.

"The 2008 General Conference asked us to streamline the ordination process and make changes that would move us to mission-oriented rather than a clergy-oriented church," said NC Conference Bishop Al Gwinn, chair of the commission.

The commission report is now available for review and comments at www.gbhem.org/ministrystudy. Comments can be e-mailed to ministrystudy@gbhem.org.

"We can't expect the 2012 General Conference just to trust us, so we want to continue the conversation with the church and its bodies regarding our work as we determine the legislation that needs to be written to accomplish the things we need to do to have a healthy church," Gwinn said.

However, he said action must be taken. "If we do not choose in 2012 to fix the situation in a way to make the church healthier and to have a more missional stance, finances are going to fix it for us," he said.

"For example, if we have five more clergy than we need, we put them in churches that can't afford it. Furthermore, those churches then get behind in pension and insurance and the annual conference has to take money from resources to make up the pension and insurance those churches couldn't pay," Gwinn said.

Eventually, he said, the annual conferences cannot afford to make up the difference.

Several members of the Ministry Study Commission led a discussion on the proposals during the General Board of Higher Education's fall meeting in Nashville in October.

Although there are too many clergy in some areas, commis-

sion members expressed concern about the still low numbers of young people entering ministry and the decline in the percentage of middle-age clergy poised to assume leadership in the church.

The Rev. Meg Lassiat, GBHEM's director of Candidacy, Mentoring, and Conference Relations, said that while the percentage of young clergy has increased, the numbers are still alarmingly small – just 946 elders and 89 deacons were under age 35 in 2010.

And she said there are fewer middle-age clergy positioned to assume executive or large-church clergy leadership positions.

"Clergy age 35 to 54 now make up only 45 percent of elders. In 1985, 65 percent of active elders were in that age group," Lassiat said.

To address the continuing small percentage of young adult clergy, the commission calls on conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to give strategic leadership to annual conference, districts, congregations, campus ministries, camps, and other appropriate ministries to create a culture of call among youth and young adults.

Three proposals

The commission has three proposals aimed at improving the candidacy process:

1. Having a vocational discernment coordinator on the Board of Ordained Ministry in each annual conference
2. Requiring a ministry prep school for all elder, deacon, or local pastor candidates immediately after certification as a candidate.
3. Moving to group candidacy mentoring.

Bishop Grant Hagiya said that lack of access to trained mentors has been "one of the huge bottlenecks."

In addition, commissioning will be dropped. The practice of commissioning has not been well under-



Commission members and GBHEM staff presented the report at the Fall GBHEM board of directors meeting.

stood or accepted by the church, causing confusion and diminishing the nature of the gift of ordination, several members said.

"The Boards of Ordained Ministry will oversee candidates earlier, and ordination will replace commissioning in the process," Hagiya said.

Ordination and provisional membership could occur as early as the completion of educational requirements, and would be separated from full conference membership, he said.

Security of employment

The Rev. David Dodge said that the commission believes security of employment, commonly called guaranteed appointment, has been a barrier to fulfilling the church's mission.

"It results in caring for the needs of clergy rather than the needs of the church. It restricts flexibility and is not sustainable," Dodge said.

"Our vision is fruitful congregations that are transforming individuals and communities served by effective clergy undergirded by a system that is itinerant, open, flexible, and responsive," he said.

The commission affirmed the practice of itinerancy as effective and responsive to the covenantal obedience to call.

In order to accomplish the shift away from security of appointment, Dodge said the commission calls on the general church to determine limited and standard fitness assessments, and if necessary, revise transitional leave policies.

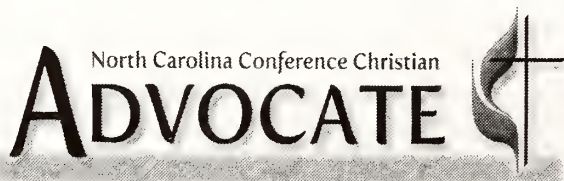
Annual conferences, Boards of Ordained Ministry, cabinets, and bishops will need to determine a clear definition of and method for evaluating clergy, as well as coordinating with the General

See "Ministry study," page 5

Ministry Study

The report includes definitions, challenges, and recommendations for the following areas:

- A Culture of Call
- Vocational Discernment
- Preparation for Authorization
- Commissioning and Ordination
- Orders of Ministry
- Local Pastors
- Sacramental Authority
- The Appointive Process



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.



Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, received the VIP Award on behalf of the NC Conference from Garner Mayor Ronnie S. Williams at a town council meeting.

NCC receives Visual Image Award for Garner headquarters building

The NC Conference has received a 2010 Fall Visual Image Program (VIP) Award for the new conference headquarters building in Garner. The award was presented during the Nov. 16 Garner Town Council meeting in a joint presentation by the Garner Planning Commission and the Town Council. Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, received the award for the Board of Trustees.

Awards were presented in three categories: existing development, industrial development and new development. The winning projects were selected on the basis of meeting two or more of the following criteria: creative architectural detailing, exceptional landscape design and installation, innovative siting of the building, and enhancement to the visual appeal of a Garner thoroughfare.

The VIP award to the conference was for new development. During the presentation, the conference headquarters was cited for being an "environmentally sustainable design, construction and operations that qualified the site as a LEED-certified project and the richness in detail of the architecture, combined with the wooded setting, make the site a unique addition to the Town of Garner."

Dodson received a plaque for the conference from Garner Mayor Ronnie S. Williams in recognition of the building, site, and construction contributing toward enhancing the visual image of Garner. She thanked the commission and council for the recognition and then was congratulated by the other five council members.

The two-story, 32,000 square foot conference building is located at 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, off Greenfield Parkway near the intersection of Interstate 40 and Highway 70. It was dedicated on June 6 as a debt-free building. The sale of the old conference building and adjoining property in Raleigh paid for the construction.

Garner developed the VIP Awards in the mid-1990s to publicly recognize business properties in Garner with site development that reflects positively on the businesses and the surrounding community.

Ministry study commission presents report

Continued from page 4

Board of Pension and Health Benefits on resources, methods, and practices for voluntary separation of employment and employment transitions.

Bishop James Swanson expressed concern that the role of the candidate's home church and home church pastor is being reduced.

"In the move to expediency, some are moving away from the candidate's meeting first his or her own pastor and having the opportunity to preach, do Bible study, and practice what it really means to be a pastor," he said.

The possibility of discrimination against women and racial-ethnic clergy was also a concern.

Hagiya and Gwinn said the commission had asked for input from the Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Commission on Race and Religion about how to protect women and

racial-ethnic clergy from discrimination when the church moves away from guaranteed appointment.

"There also must be a process by which clergy can appeal if they are not appointed," he said.

Sacramental authority

The Rev. Ianther Mills reported on the commission's recommendations concerning sacramental authority, expressing concern that ministry is becoming isolated rather than collaborative.

"Sacramental authority extends through the bishop to the Order of Elders and sacraments should be available to the whole church, with authority given to deacons for missional purposes and local pastors when an elder is not available," she said.

** Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.*

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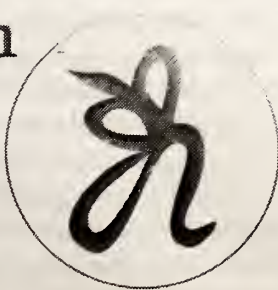
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Call to Action report: Reform needed *continued from page 1*

commitment are on fostering and sustaining congregational vitality."

Among the group's recommendations:

- ♦ Starting in January 2011, make congregational vitality the church's "true first priority" for at least a decade.
- ♦ Dramatically reform clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation and accountability. This would include dismissing ineffective clergy and sanctioning under-performing bishops.
- ♦ Collect statistical information in consistent and uniform ways for the denomination to measure attendance, growth and engagement. "We should passionately care about results," the group said.
- ♦ Reform the Council of Bishops, with the active bishops assuming responsibility for promoting congregational vitality and for establishing a new culture of accountability throughout the church.
- ♦ Consolidate general church agencies and align their work and resources with the priorities of the church and the decade-long commitment to build vital congregations.
- ♦ Also, the agencies should be reconstituted with smaller, competency-based boards.

Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, steering team co-chair, said he hopes his fellow bishops will receive the report as "the faithful, thoughtful and diligent work of other United Methodists who are yearning with hope for the church."

Some of the recommendations also may require the approval of General Conference, the church's top legislative body.



Tia Tucker, left, and Robin Pearce are two of many young people active at First Grace United Methodist Church, New Orleans. A new report urges that congregational vitality be a denominational priority. A UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert.

No more 'business as usual'

In the wake of decades-long membership declines, the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table created the 16-member Call to Action Steering Team, which includes clergy and laity, to reorder the life of the church for greater effectiveness in the church's mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The team based its recommendations on two studies it commissioned from independent researchers.

One was an "Operational Assessment of the Connectional Church" that found the church was undergoing a "creeping crisis of relevance" and rated general agencies below average in fulfilling the church's mission.

Another study, "The Vital Congregations Research Project," analyzed data from 32,228 United Methodist churches in North America and classified 4,961 congregations, or 15 percent, as "high-vital" local churches.

The study found that four key drivers of congregational vitality in the United States are effective pastoral leadership, multiple small groups, diverse worship styles and a high percentage of spiritually engaged laity in leadership roles.

What is not acceptable, Call to Action members emphasized throughout their report, is the status quo.

"Leaders, beginning with the bishops and including lay and clergy across the Connection, must lead and immediately, repeatedly, and energetically make it plain that our current culture and practices are resulting in overall decline that is toxic and constricts our missional effectiveness," the report said.

"Business as usual is unsustainable. Instead, dramatically different new behaviors, not incremental changes, are required."

'Job one'

Local churches don't have to wait for action from the Council of Bishops or General Conference to get started.

Neil Alexander, co-chair of the steering team and president of the United Methodist Publishing House, said the proposed 10-year emphasis to congregational vitality is in keeping with the already-established goals of the denomination.

His hope is that the 10-year emphasis will lead the church in its strategic planning at all levels of administration to make vitality "job one."

A big part of that emphasis is holding church leaders accountable for church vitality. The report recommends the denomination create "prompt and humane ways" for under-performing clergy to exit or be declined entry into the professional ministry in the first place. The report also recommends sanctions for under-performing bishops.

"The need for accountability by the church's leadership—especially the bishops—for results in the life of the church is absolutely crucial for the challenges as we go forward," Alexander said.

The Call to Action team is still unsure which recommendations will require the passage of legislation at General Conference to implement, Alexander said.

The team recommends that the Council of Bishops establish an

"Interim Operations Team" to determine what legislation is required.

The team would also work with the Council of Bishops, Connectional Table and the general agencies to plan the denominational funding and budget that will be considered at the 2012 General Conference.

Ultimately, the message and ministry of The United Methodist Church is one worth saving, Alexander said.

"The Gospel and our Wesleyan view of the way God's grace goes before us and beckons us to God is of such critical importance that it must not be ignored," he said.

"The integration of personal and social holiness is a way of being in the world that can redeem a broken and hurting world. That is no less true today than when the circuit riders set out to spread scriptural holiness across the land," said Alexander.

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

Bishops support

continued from page 3

other parts of the world applauded the report's recommendations—particularly the call for greater accountability.

"It's time for us as bishops to stand up and do this," said Zimbabwe Area Bishop Eben K. Nihwatiwa. "Let us make this happen."

Not every recommendation requires action by the bishops or the General Conference. Local churches can work on the drivers of vitality now, said team members.

Palmer acknowledged that church leaders have made similar recommendations before with the goal of improving church vitality. And some church members have criticized the report as the "same old, same old."

"There has not always been sustained attention and organizational follow-through on good things that have been initiated," Palmer said. "I think people are rightfully concerned about the church's attention span."

Still, he said, he is optimistic this is the beginning of a new thing in the denomination.

"I feel as though this council is digging in sustained focus and, hopefully, we will stick with it as long as it has been suggested, which is at least 10 years."

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

Our Christmas Prayer

May we seek new life
like the wise ones of old.
May we hear anew the joy-filled message of
the angels.
May we ponder with Mary the earthly visit
by The Divine.
May our lives be so transformed by our visit
to the manger...
That every life we touch will also know of
God's great gift to all people.

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Answering the call to "Come over and help"

By Bill Haddock *

Liberia was the destination of the first American Methodist missionary sent abroad. Although in ill health, Melville Cox, previously the pastor at Edenton Street Methodist Church in Raleigh, made the voyage in 1832 to Liberia to begin his ministry.

Before he boarded the ship, he asked a friend to write his epitaph if he was to die in Africa. "What shall I write?" asked the friend. Cox responded, "Let a thousand die before Africa be given up." The ministry of Melville Cox inspired many other missionaries who went to Africa with a desire to share the gospel.

Because of his illness, which only grew worse in Liberia, Cox's ministry in that country was short-lived. And yet he had great influence—as noted by the church named for him and for the building at the College of West Africa named for him.

In these days of great change on the missions field, Cox's ministry might seem terribly out of date. In fact, we know that part of his work and the work of other missionaries would now be seen as being highly presumptuous.

The question is raised "how can those of us from a Western perspective presume to tell the African people anything about Christianity that they are not already practicing?" If anything, the Church in most parts of Africa could easily send us missionaries that might teach us something about church growth, planting churches, and making disciples for Jesus Christ.

At the same time, we know that the African churches, and particularly the Liberian Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church has been highly dependent over the years upon American United Methodists for support for their ministries.

Many times in an effort to be partners, we have actually been the dominant resource for items, and money, and decision-making. Instead of a partnership, we have helped to develop a culture of dependency.

But times are changing from the old "we are the missionaries and we know what's good for you" mentality that some have had in the past. What has been done was done in love and was received with thanksgiving. The Missions Team of the NC Conference hopes to take the next step and listen to our Liberian brothers and sisters—and truly build upon that relationship and help to undergird the ministries of the Liberian Annual Conference—particularly as they minister to their own youth and children.

It is these youth and children who are the most vulnerable after the various civil wars in Liberia. It is those children who were forcibly enlisted into military service or for prostitution. An entire generation of persons who are now young adults, who are having children themselves, are at risk.

The Love for Liberia program seeks to assist programs started by persons who live in Africa and who see immense starving and loss of hope everyday. These modern-day missionaries are working in conditions which would discourage many of us.

And yet they have hope—hope that their partners in ministry will not abandon

***Our Conference
has been asked
by the Liberian
Annual Conference
to offer assistance—
"a hand up" during
this time of peace.***

***The Love for Liberia team
invites you to go on this
journey of faith and outreach
to a country that is in need.
Our Conference can answer a
call like that of the call which
Paul received in Troas, "Come
over and help us!"***

***The people called Methodists
can be a conduit of God's love
from one shore to another.
With Christ leading us, Africa
will "not be given up." But
this time, neither will we be
given up. God will provide in
abundance what is needed
for the work of his saints. (II
Corinthians 8)***

outreach to a country that is in need. Our Conference can answer a call like that of the call which Paul received in Troas, "Come over and help us!"

The people called Methodists can be a conduit of God's love from one shore to another. With Christ leading us, Africa will "not be given up." But this time, neither will we be given up. God will provide in abundance what is needed for the work of his saints (II Corinthians 8).

don them before a new vision for ministry can take hold.

Up to this point, the civil wars in Liberia have cost the whole country. There is little infrastructure upon which to move commerce. Education is compulsory for younger children, but the government cannot fund their education. Children and their parents need counseling. And most importantly, they need hope.

Even in the transition period of time when the Love for Liberia wants the country to be self-sufficient, we know that there are children who need help at schools right now.

There are medical clinics that need medicine and staffing to be trained. There are persons who need to learn how to live off the land efficiently and to learn to make a living for their families by learning new agricultural techniques. There are colleges that need scholarships. The list goes on.

But this time, the list comes from our African missionaries who have seen what the light of the gospel can do in the darkness of extreme poverty, social disruption, and even in the face of continued conflict.

Our Conference has been asked by the Liberian Annual Conference to offer assistance—"a hand up" during this time of peace.

The Love for Liberia team invites you to go on this journey of faith and

* The Rev. Bill Haddock is NC Conference Global Missions Secretary, a member of the Love for Liberia steering committee, and pastor at Garner UMC.

A nourishing business

By Jim Perry *

Ms. Bendu Dolo and her friends, from a village near the United Methodist Mission Station at Ganta, Liberia, heard about Moringa, a fast growing tree with nourishing leaves. They planted the trees and soon harvested leaves to include with their food. Nearby villagers learned about the benefits and asked for some leaves. A nourishing business was born.

Dolo began selling the leaves from her trees, and when the demand was greater than her supply, she bought, for resale, leaves from other farmers. She took leaves 170 miles, to the capital city of Monrovia and spread the word about the wonders of Moringa.

Dolo's lucrative business flourished, and the health of her clients improved. The next successful area for her marketing efforts was the Firestone Rubber Plantation. With her new-found confidence, Dolo intruded into the office of the government's Minister of Health to tell the nutrition story of the "Miracle Tree." The minister soon became convinced of the benefits of Moringa and now includes promotion of Moringa use in official policy.

In September 2008, Dolo shared with mission team members from Edenton St. UMC, "I feel wealthy!" During a subsequent visit in May of this year, she indicated that she was building a new house and wanted team members to see it on their next trip to Liberia.

Dolo and her friends, while proclaiming the health benefits of "The Miracle Tree" to nearby villages, affectionately become known as "The Moringa Ladies." While doing good, they also greatly enhanced their income by building a successful business.

The miracle tree

In much of Liberia, villagers and farmers have discovered the benefits of Moringa, a tree grown in the tropics, often referred to as "The Miracle Tree." In 2002, Mozart Adevu, the director of UMCOR's "Sustainable Agriculture and Development" program in Africa, introduced the benefits of Moringa, to rural Liberians, in its training program. Word spread rapidly.

In Senegal, Church World Service personnel heard recurring reports claiming that crushed Moringa seeds would clarify turbid water resulting in pure water. A further observation was that if a malnourished nursing mother and infant child included the leaves of the Moringa tree with their food, that both could become adequately nourished, in two to three weeks. Medicinal claims have also been made. It is the claim of nutrition improvement, that gained the most attention of Church World Service workers. Subsequent scientific laboratory testing revealed that Moringa had outstanding nutritional benefits.

* Jim Perry is a member of Edenton Street UMC who has been to Liberia a number of times. He works closely with ESUMC's missions emphasis on West Africa and is a member of the Love for Liberia steering committee.



Bendu Dolo

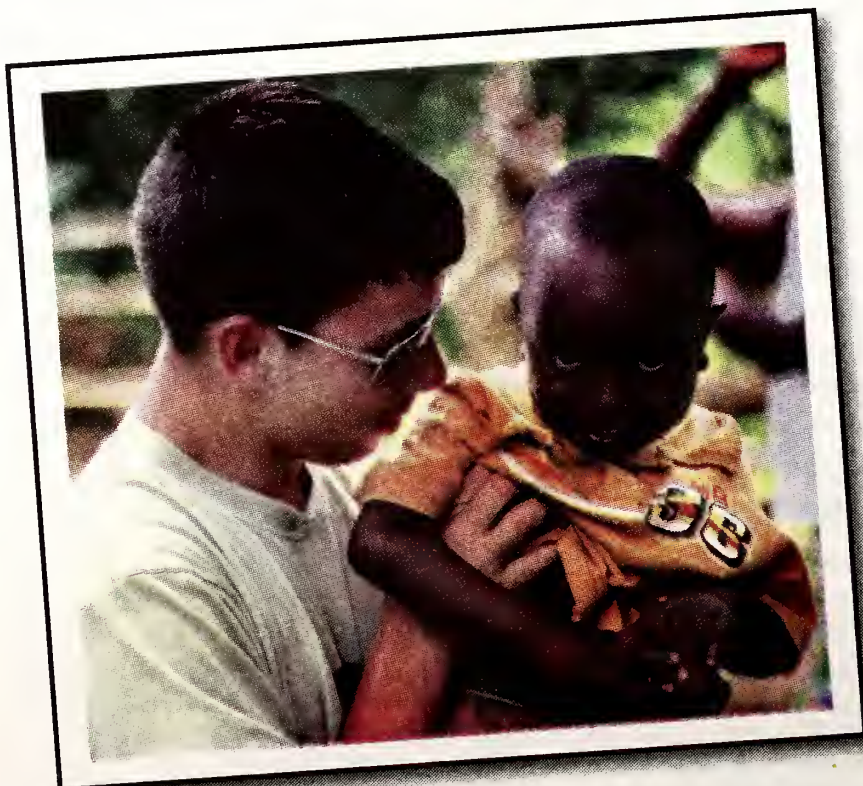
Reflections from Liberia

About 10 years ago, Herbert Zigbuo, a missionary to Liberia, spoke at the worship services, and it was then that God touched my heart and made it clear that I was to go to Liberia and form a relationship with the school in Ganta. It took me 10 years to heed that call.

I still struggle to think of the right word to capture this experience, and the closest I can come is "life-altering." Connecting with the associate pastor of the small United Methodist Church on the mission compound, Aaron Yankee, was a God-thing, as I heard his vision for the many, many children in Ganta – how he wants to teach them to love God and love their neighbors through his Vacation Bible School, his Christmas mission to the children in the hospital, the Sunday School program, and his dream to offer the children who grow up on the streets of Ganta a hope for a better future through the love of Christ.

My prayer is that we can continually support Aaron and his children (over 300) at the small mission church in Ganta by providing supplies, literature, finances to send children to school, and by our prayers.

- Dorothy Funkhouser, Director of Christian Education, Haymount UMC



Jordan and a new friend

Africa was an amazing experience. The people there were thankful for the little they had and so grateful for our helping hands. The land in Liberia was beautiful. I met a guy named Jackson who was our driver and his greatest dream is to come to America to be a truck driver. I hope that one day he will be able to come to America and fulfill his dreams, and then I can show him my country where we have so much, like electricity and clean running water. I know the people in Liberia think we are the richest nation in the world, and now I know how blessed we really are.

— Jordan B, age 16, Haymount UMC, Fayetteville

For the future

Since 1998, Edenton Street UMC has had a strong mission effort in Liberia. During the civil war, ESUMC's Africa Sub-Committee responded to the emergency needs of the Liberian people as indicated by United Methodist missionaries serving there.

In the earlier years, a "balanced" response was made through the program: "Five Pathways To Holistic Mission in Liberia." Medical, nutritional and health needs were addressed. X-Ray machines, autoclaves and other medical equipment was shipped to the Ganta United Methodist Hospital. Nutritional needs of the people were enhanced by introducing the "miracle tree"—Moringa. General health needs were addressed by providing appropriate health training material to United Methodist schools.

During the period of instability, church related private schools were the only schools filling that need. In recent years, the government's "free and compulsory" schools have been introduced, and USAID has provided most of the funding for that development. Edenton Street implemented its "Operation Textbook" program. Textbooks, from NC public schools, were collected/sorted and shipped to Liberia from the MERCI Center in Goldsboro. In Liberia, a 3,200 square foot warehouse was renovated to permit an organized distribution of appropriate textbooks and school supplies to United Methodist schools.

Currently in Liberia, 80% of the food consumed in the country comes from the outside. Most of it is provided by a USAID program. Recently, Dr. Charles Rogers, former specialist in Agricultural Education, N.C. Dept. of Education said: "The Africa Sub-Committee has adopted several initiatives in Agriculture to help Liberians to feed themselves. In this regard, for the last 3 years, ESUMC has supported an Agriculturalist, the Rev. Benjaamin Bangura, to promote the production and utilization of Moringa in its Nutrition Improvement program (NIP). Improved agricultural practices have been realized by supporting UMCOR's 'Sustainable Agriculture and Development' program. Recently, trials have been conducted to simply, and at low cost, reclaim abandoned church owned land into crop production."

Dr. Norm Hostetter, retired administrator, State University of New York, Central Office notes: "ESUMC is currently researching appropriate training materials to advance elementary business management skills among poor people with good ideas for improving their income but with limited education and resources. A basic training series, "Where There Are No Jobs," has been distributed to a few Liberian administrators to determine its usefulness for such training."

Leadership skills are required in churches, communities, as well as local and national government. Dr. Woody Fairbrother, retired military and Junior ROTC instructor in Durham schools, recently said: "Effective leadership in the church, the community and the government is an extremely important element in the development of Third World Countries. ESUMC has conducted one training series in "Leadership Development" for Liberians. There are current plans to include some exciting new leadership training materials in conducting additional leadership training in the near future."

Now that there is political stability in the country, ESUMC's Africa Sub-Committee's focus is in Agriculture and Self-Reliance training and implementation efforts. An additional agriculturalist has recently been hired. The committee is currently in discussions with the NC Conference Mission Team to initiate an enhanced Agriculture and Self Reliance program.



For the past several years, I have been moved by stories of children spending the majority of their day carrying water to their homes for cooking and drinking. Furthermore, the water was not clean and cholera and dysentery are responsible for a very high child mortality rate. I have also been convicted by the tremendous inequity between the wealth here and the poverty in so much of the rest of the world. I began to wonder what God must think when He sees us turn a blind eye toward such poverty and starvation. My trip to Liberia was a confirmation that I have found a place where I can be of help to wonderful, appreciative people and have confidence that my gifts are used responsibly.

Reflections from Liberia

Amid the remains of bombed-out buildings we found the most amazing, resilient, hopeful and faith-filled people. We encountered committed leaders and workers striving with very few material resources, working long hours for meager salaries to provide the spiritual, medical and educational framework for a country fully involved in post-civil war rehabilitation.

If I were to list the ten most amazing people I have encountered in my lifetime, two of them are in Liberia. The director of the hospital and the director of the project with which we worked,

both Liberian male nurses who were educated at the Ganta Methodist Mission Station are making contributions which are changing the future of their community and country – every day. Both have spent time in the US receiving post-graduate education, in NC in fact, and choose to use their gifts and talents to better the health of their people.

My mission involved the use of my talents to strengthen and improve their delivery of services to women and children while working with a multidisciplinary team of a midwife, a nurse, a health educator, an immunization specialist and a community organizer. Daily, we were welcomed by tribal leaders with gifts, and mothers with their young children, many ill with malaria, lined up to receive medical care and health education.

Often I was overwhelmed by the needs, but at the same time astounded by the resilience, hope and generosity of the villagers. I was amidst people who often did not have enough to eat, yet they prepared a meal to share with us in a display of gratitude and solidarity of the human spirit. They are God's creation, created in His image, as am I.

**— Brenda Booth,
Haymount UMC,
Fayetteville**



- Rick Booth, Haymount UMC, Fayetteville



A Liberian nurse and Brenda



Shepherd's Helpers of Jarvis Memorial celebrate 50+ ramps

In September, Shepherd's Helpers of Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville hosted a brunch to "Celebrate 50"—the completion of their 50th ramp project. All recipients of ramps and other Helpers projects were invited along with various church members and supporters.

The Mission of Shepherd's Helpers is to help seniors and physically challenged remain in their homes. This effort is based on the Parable of

the Good Samaritan.

Initially the vision was to change light bulbs, light switches, and other basic needs for church members unable to take care of such tasks. The first request to the Helpers was a handicap ramp for one of our church members. The Lord has been directing the volunteers in that direction since that time.

Soon, requests came for help outside Jarvis, and Shepherd's Helpers helped a 12-year-old quadriplegic boy, living in a home 46 inches off the ground. This began the expansion to serve the population of Pitt County. Teams have now provided 62 ramps in various sizes ranging up to 72 feet long.

Over the past seven years, more than \$90,000 in materials have been expended with estimated volunteer labor of over \$300,000.

Several of the Helpers will never forget returning to check on one of the ramps. The lady of the house came bounding out on her "hot wheels" with the biggest, happiest smile on her face. For the first time in a number of years, she had just that morning driven her chair down the ramp to her son's house to play with her grandchildren all by herself. The

transformation that had taken place in her and her husband was miraculous and hearts were warmed.

The volunteers are enthused to be in the community witnessing and sharing God's love to others.

They feel called to be a witness for the Lord by sharing their gifts with others, whether it is local, national or worldwide.

What a feeling it is when tears, hugs and smiles are passed around at the end of a long day and a bit of independence is regained.



Shepherd's Helpers of Jarvis Memorial UMC hosted a meal and celebration of the completion of over 50 wheelchair ramps and other projects for people in Pitt County.

Dr. Ben Hancock named fourth president of MU

After a nationwide search, Dr. Ben E. Hancock, Jr. has been named as the fourth president of Methodist University. He succeeds Dr. M. Elton Hendricks, who is retiring after serving as the president of Methodist University for 27 years. Dr. Hancock will take office March 1, 2011.



Dr. Ben Hancock

is fortunate to have such capable leadership and caring people associated with the University."

Dr. Hancock has served as vice-president for university advancement at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, since July 1, 2006.

He was responsible for overseeing the administrative areas of University Advancement,

which include: University Development, Advancement Services, Alumni Programs, and the Alumni Center. He served on the school's Strategic Planning Committee and led a comprehensive \$200 million Ball State Bold Campaign. Prior to serving at Ball State University, he served from 1989 – 2006 as vice-president for institutional advancement at Albion College in Michigan. He was responsible for the areas of alumni and parent relations, communications, corporate and foundation relations, development, gift and estate planning, and capital

"We feel that Dr. Hancock is a strong strategic planner who has a passion for the educational experience that a private, co-educational liberal arts university can offer. He is committed to the University's mission of engaging, enriching, and empowering students to strive for academic, spiritual, and social/civic excellence," said Harvey T. Wright II, chair of the board of trustees.

"I am truly honored to serve as the next president of Methodist University and to continue the excellent work of Elton Hendricks and the Board of Trustees," said Hancock. "I have been so impressed with the faculty, staff, and students at the University during my visits. Methodist

See "MU president," page 15

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SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

UM Higher Education Foundation scholarships going online

Coming in 2011, students may apply for any of scholarships offered by the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation by using an online application process.* The online scholarship application process for United Methodist Dollars for Scholars, General Named Endowed Scholarships and United Methodist Leadership Scholars programs will open on January 1, 2011. Application deadlines vary by program. Visit www.UMHEF.org and learn more about receiving scholarships and giving to the Foundation's scholarship funds so the next generation of United Methodist leaders can prepare.

Church & Society Peace with Justice applications due - Jan. 7

Jan. 7 is the deadline to apply for a Peace with Justice grant from the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. Objectives for the grant include promotion, advocacy and leadership development related to issues of peace, reconciliation and human rights.

Grant applicants must be either a United Methodist or other affiliated organization, or an ecumenical group working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization. Funding for the program is generated through the Peace with Justice offering received in June. To access the application form, go to www.umc-gbcs.org and select the GBCS Grants option from the Leadership Development menu.

Apply for 2011 Ethnic Local Church grant by Jan. 10

Jan. 10 is the deadline to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants are to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership development as they engage in social justice.

To qualify for grant consideration, applicants must be either:

- A United Methodist local church, district, annual conference, racial/ethnic caucus, or other affiliated ethnic group/organization; or
- An ecumenical group/organization working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization whose program has an impact on at least one United Methodist ethnic minority local church.

Grant recipients must be programs initiated by or developed in partnership with one or more United Methodist ethnic minority local churches. Racial/ethnic persons shall be the majority of those served by the program.

The project must focus on needs identified by ethnic local churches as they address one or more chronic social problems or concerns, such as housing, employment, health care, human rights, education, the environment and racism. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church contained in its Book of Discipline, (¶¶s 160-165) can provide more information on denominational social justice positions.

All applicants must have a supervisory board consisting of a majority of ethnic minority persons that shall make all policy decisions.

Each funding request will be considered on its own merits with no required minimum or maximum amount. All funding from GBCS must be used for programmatic components and not for salaries, purchase of equipment, purely administrative costs, and direct delivery of services or building construction.

Two funding periods are available for consideration: Jan. 10 is deadline for the spring cycle and Aug. 10 for Fall 2011.

The Ethnic Local Church Committee of GBCS's Board of Directors makes grant recommendations to the full board for approval. Intent of the grants program is to provide start-up money. Therefore, priority goes to first-time applicants. Priority consideration shall be given to programs that are part of a Comprehensive Plan of an Annual Conference.

For more information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie (nchristie@umc-gbcs.org), GBCS assistant general secretary, Education & Leadership Formation, at (202) 488-5611 or download the application at Ethnic Local Church Grant.

Apply for Human Relations Day grants targeting non-violent young offenders by Jan. 10

Jan. 10 is the deadline to apply for a Human Relations Day Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants are to support ministries that respond to non-violent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development.

Grant funds are raised through The United Methodist Church's Human Relations Day Special Sunday each year. Special Sundays are an opportunity for United Methodist churches to celebrate the denomination's connectional work. This day of social action and raising awareness supports the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

The United Methodist Book of Discipline describes Human Relations Day as a call to "the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other."

To qualify for a Human Relations Day grant, the applicant must be either:

- A United Methodist local church, district, annual conference or other affiliated group/organization; or
- An ecumenical group/organization working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization, whose program affects at least one United Methodist local church.

Grants are awarded on two funding cycles. Jan. 10 is the deadline for March funding; Aug. 10 for funding in October 2011. Grant decisions are made by GBCS's Board of Directors at the spring and fall meetings.

To be considered for funding, a project must be initiated by or developed in partnership with a United Methodist church. The project must focus on needs of non-violent juvenile youth offenders as they address one or more chronic social problems or concerns, such as housing, employment, health care, human rights, education, the environment and racism.

Applicants must have a supervisory board consisting of a majority of members of The United Methodist Church that shall make all policy decisions.

All funding from GBCS must be used for programmatic components and not for salaries, purchase of equipment, purely administrative costs, and direct delivery of services or building construction.

Intent of the grant is to provide start-up money.

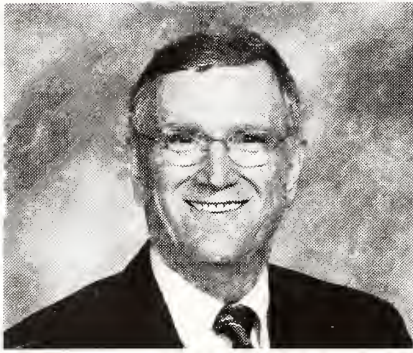
Grant applications are available at Human Relations Day Grant, or by contacting Marvlyn Scott (msscott@umc-gbcs.org), in the office of Education & Leadership Formation, (202) 488-5643.

For more information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie (nchristie@umc-gbcs.org), assistant general secretary, Education & Leadership Formation, (202) 488-5611.

The General Board of Church & Society is one of four international general program boards of The United Methodist Church. The board's primary areas of ministry are Advocacy, Education & Leadership Formation, United Nations & International Affairs, and resourcing these areas for the denomination. It has offices on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and in the Church Center at the United Nations.

Grant applications due for ministry with older adults - Jan. 15

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is providing grants related to older adult ministry in the area of Caregiving Ministry in 2011, the General Board of Discipleship has announced. The grants, part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries, will be available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions. All grant applications will be reviewed by the United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries. The committee is also responsible for the selection process. Submission deadline is Jan. 15, 2011. Grants will be awarded by the committee in Fall 2011. For further information and an application, go to www.aging-umc.org and select Caregiving Ministry with Older Adults Grant Application.



adult BIBLE STUDY

January 2011

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

January 2, 2011

Text: Isaiah 44:21-26
"I Am Your Redeemer"

As you begin this new year, what about 2010 would you most like to leave behind? Memory of a bad moment? A time of pain or broken health? A shattered relationship?

How about your sin? Would you like a fresh start in your relationship with God?

The prophet Isaiah offers an assurance that God has cleared the slate (Isaiah 44:22).

God's invitation is to return to God (44:22).

The word translated "return" is the same word used when the exiled people of Israel were invited to return home.

Perhaps that is what it means to come back to God: leave the places that separate us from Him.

Does this sound like repentance? Turning—returning—to go in a new direction. The text says "Return!"

It is important to note that the invitation is to return to God because this very same word is sometimes translated "backslide"!

One can return to ways of sin or one can return to God.

It is God's grace that makes it possible for us to have a fresh start. In the Wesleyan tradition, we sometimes call it "prevenient grace"—that gift that comes even before we know it, certainly before we deserve it. The study text says, "I have redeemed you" (44:22). That is why we can have a new beginning with God, not because we have earned it, but because God

has moved to redeem us.

Do you feel beyond the redemptive power of God?

That is how the Hebrew people must have felt, Jerusalem left empty, the cities of Judah devastated (44:26). It is in the face of just that kind of despair that Isaiah sends the good word: Jerusalem shall thrive and the cities of Judah will be repaired (44:26).

God sends that same good word to us: what has been broken in our relationship with God can be restored.

God's grace is sufficient even for the likes of us. So, return! And happy new year.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Roberta Bondi (*A Place to Pray*, Abingdon Press) quotes this story: "A soldier asked Abba Mius if God accepted repentance...(The old man) said, 'Tell me, my dear, if your cloak is torn, do you throw it away?' He replied, 'No, I mend it and use it again.' (Mius) said to him, 'If you are so careful about your cloak, will not God be equally careful about (God's) creature?'"

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "With gratitude, O God, I come to this new year, because Your grace waits for me as the new year begins. No—Your grace pursues me and calls me home..."

January 9, 2011

Text: Isaiah 45:18-24
"Turn to Me and Be Saved"

There may have been a time in Israel's history when believers in Yahweh simply felt they were worshiping the best god out of a number of gods (for example, Joshua 24:16 and Exodus 20:3). The prophet Isaiah, however, is clear that the only true god

is Yahweh. Isaiah 45:18: "There is no other." Isaiah 45:5: "There is no other; besides me there is no other." Isaiah 45:14: "God is with you alone; there is no god besides him." Isaiah 45:21: "There is no other god besides me." Isaiah 45:22: "For I am God, and there is no other." After all that, we can almost hear the prophet saying, "Uh, folks, did you get the point?"

In Isaiah 45:22, God says, "Turn to me and be saved." The word translated "saved" is *yasha'*. Another form of that word is *yeshu'a*—the Hebrew name given to our Lord Jesus. Savior! The one who saves has a name!

The invitation to salvation is inclusive ("all the ends of the earth"—Isaiah 45:22). This text flies in the face of those who say that God picks out some to be saved and says "no" to others. The love of God has not drawn the boundaries that we humans seem to do.

One way that Isaiah underlines the inclusive love of God is by pointing out that God created all (Isaiah 45:18). Another emphasis on the inclusive love of God is the reminder that God has not spoken in secret, but in declaration (Isaiah 45:19).

Look at Isaiah 45:23. God gives a divine oath! God keeps God's promises, so this verse offers about as much assurance as we are likely to get. The promise is "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." We are familiar with Philippians 2:10-11 in which that promise is echoed: "So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"In heaven, on earth, under the earth" just about covers it! The Lordship of God extends to all of creation, all of humanity, all that is, all that has been, and all that is to be. For me, the issue is not so much whether aardvarks will eventually worship God; the issue is that I have no place where I can hide from God's love, God's will, God's purposes, God's judgment, God's grace.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Bryan Stone (*Thy Nature and Thy Name Is Love*, Kingswood Books) wrote: "Central to (this theology) is the belief that God, as creator, is prior

to and a persuasive influence in the becoming of every actual entity. The emphasis in this process doctrine of creation, however, is not on temporal origins (though God is certainly prior to any and every world temporally speaking) but on the manner of creativity...God does indeed create the world precisely by saving it and leading it patiently toward God's vision."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Creator God, Savior God..."

January 16, 2011

Text: Isaiah 48:14-19, 21-22
"Reassurance for God's People"

Last fall, I had great fun teaching an advanced preaching class for the Duke Course of Study. In addition to the joy of working with relatively new preachers, I had great delight in creating imaginary crisis situations in which the assigned preachers for the day would have to preach. (The course was on preaching the lectionary in crisis settings.)

For example, what kind of sermon would you preach if the congregation wants to honor one of its own who is going to prepare for ordained ministry—oh, did I mention that you think he is morally, academically, and spiritually unprepared for such ministry?

Of course, it was more delight for me in conjuring up the crisis situations than it was for the students who had to prepare and preach (on short notice)! When I read this week's study texts, I remembered those classes in which we heard sermon after sermon delivered in the midst of a crisis. Isaiah was writing to a people still recalling the crisis of the exile to Babylon (Isaiah 48:20). Isaiah was writing to a people who have seen the prospects for prosperity turn into emptiness (Isaiah 48:18). Isaiah was writing to a people who are mystified that God seems to be using a pagan (Cyrus) to accomplish God's purposes (Isaiah 48:14).

What is the message from God in the midst of this series of crisis moments?

See "Bible Study," page 13

DEATHS

BOONE, Ruth E., widow of Daniel C. Boone, died Oct. 28. A memorial service was held Oct. 31, at Halifax UMC.

BENFIELD, Jack Monroe (Raleigh retired) died Nov. 8. A memorial service was held Nov. 12 at Garner UMC.

MARRIAGE

Stephen C. Compton (Sanford: district superintendent) and Katherine Baldwin Daniel were married on Nov. 7.

Adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

Bottom line: go ahead and claim the victory even when you cannot see it. Still in exile? Get a vision of leaving Babylonian captivity and start singing joyful songs (Isaiah 48:20).

Does the world think you have been defeated? Tell everyone ("to the ends of the earth") that God has redeemed God's people (Isaiah 48:20).

It is not always easy to see resurrection while looking at a cross. It is not always easy to celebrate victory that has not been fully delivered. To help the Israelites with the good news of what will be, God reminds them how God has been with them in other times (Isaiah 48:21).

Dr. Kay Huggins has observed, "Moreover, if Israel sang before the new reality appeared, then other nations might recognize the truth at the heart of history: God's intentions for all creation were gracious."

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Crisis Preaching: Personal and Public* (Abingdon Press), Joseph R. Jeter, Jr. has written: "One of the dangers of a crisis is that it may cut us off from our memory. And, in one sense, the opposite of remember is not forget; the opposite of remember is dismember."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Restore our memory, O God..."

January 23, 2011

Text: Isaiah 49:1-6

"The Servant's Mission in the World"

Sometimes humor is a tool for saying something very serious. (Night after night, the mother knelt with her young son beside his bed so he could say his prayers. Evidently, the boy got a bit tired of saying the same thing every night, so one evening he prayed, with all seriousness and faith: "Now I lay me down to sleep and pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake—can I have breakfast with You in the morning?")

Some students of the Bible think Isaiah 49:6 is a bit of divine humor. After all, the servant has not done too great a job of getting Israel gathered back to God, so the Lord says, "Was that too small an assignment?"

Let me kick it up a notch. Now, deal not just with Israel but work on proclaiming my light to all nations, to the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)

Whether or not you find that verse a bit of "guffawing joke," the emphasis of the verse is clear: God's intent is not just to save Israel; God wants to save the entire world. After all, did not God say to Father Abraham, "...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3c)?

This same theme is offered poetically in Fred Pratt Green's hymn: "When the church of Jesus shuts its outer door, lest the roar of traffic drown the voice of prayer, may our prayers, Lord, make us ten times more aware that the world we banish is our Christian care" (Hymn 592, *United Methodist Hymnal*).

The task of the servant—dare we say "the task of the Church"?—is not only to take care of our own, but it is also to reach into life's far places, among life's far off people, and to proclaim in word and deed that God brings light into darkness.

The Wesleyan tradition is a great "both/and" tradition: both evangelism and sacramentalism, both faith and works, both personal holiness and social holiness, both inspired Scripture when written and inspired Scripture when read.

This text in Isaiah refreshes that "both/and" dimension to our journey: light and nurture for our own and light and care "to the ends of the earth."

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Road Runner* (Abingdon Press), Thomas Bandy has written: "Mission is not what you do in and for the internal church organization, but what you do among and for the local, regional, and global general public."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let our prayer begin: "God of all peoples, move in my heart that I might move in far places. Shine in my darkness

that I might carry Your light into the world..."

January 30, 2011

Text: Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12

"Healed by His Bruises"

Various translators have worked to find the best way to translate the portion of Isaiah 53:5 that gives title to this week's lesson: "Healed by His Bruises." The New International Version has "and by his wounds we are healed." The New English Bible reads "and by his scourging we are healed." The King James Version offers "and with his stripes we are healed."

In The Contemporary English Version, the text is "by taking our punishment, he made us completely well." The Living Bible paraphrase has "he was lashed and we were healed!" Good News Bible says "(we are) made whole by the blows he received." Santa Biblia (in English) puts it this way: "by his wounds we are able to reach whole health."

The word translated "healed" is the same word used when mending a torn fabric by stitching it back together.

I hear this text echoed in 2 Corinthians 5:18: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." In Christ, God has mended (healed) the brokenness, the torn places in our relationship with God.

Those who heard Isaiah's message would not necessarily have thought the prophet was describing a future messiah. Scholars who stay up late at night worrying about this kind of thing do not agree even on who wrote these verses, much less finding agreement on how it was understood some eight centuries before the birth of Jesus.

But for Christians in the twenty-first century, it is a gift to find these descriptors that anticipated Christ's

death upon the cross, a redemptive death. Even if we choose not to force our New Testament lens for reading this Old Testament passage, we can rejoice in a biblical theme that suffering can be salvific, that the hurt of one can bring healing to another.

Part of the good news of this text is that God can take pain and injustice and use it for ultimate healing. Remember Genesis 50:20?

"Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good..." In spite of the range of views about this week's lesson in Isaiah 53, one thing is clear: God is in charge.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Jürgen Moltmann has quoted Schalom Ben-Chorin on the nature of redemption (*The Way of Jesus Christ*, Fortress Press): "The Jew is profoundly aware of the unredeemed character of the world, and he perceives and recognizes no enclave of redemption in the midst of its unredeemedness...Between creation and redemption we know only one (cause): the revelation of God's will."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "You are always at work to save Your creation. Even when the cost of redemption is Your own pain, You move to save us..."

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Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

Experienced Writers Needed

At times, assignment writers are needed for the NCCC Advocate. Must be experienced with journalistic writing and AP Stylebook. Anyone interested should send samples of writing to Bill Norton, Advocate editor, bnorton@nccumc.org.

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calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conference Open House - Dec. 4

The conference is hosting an open house/tour of the United Methodist Building on Saturday, Dec. 4, from 1-4:00 p.m. All members of the NC Conference, both clergy and lay, are welcome to attend. In addition to touring the building, there will also be two ways to share in God's abundance as part of this event. In giving thanks for our blessings of good health, the Conference will sponsor a Be The Match drive that will allow individuals to register with the National Marrow Donor Program and as a potential bone marrow donors for those who are battling serious health challenges, such as leukemia. Visitors are also invited to donate non-perishable food items to a food drive which will benefit the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. For directions to the building, visit <http://nccumc.org/find/>.

Congress on Evangelism convenes in Myrtle Beach - Jan. 4-7

Set for Jan. 4-7, 2011 at the Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach, SC, the Congress on Evangelism is sponsored by the Council on Evangelism and the General Board of Discipleship with the support of The Foundation for Evangelism. The congress meets every January at different locations presenting motivational speakers and workshops based on evangelism. Learn more and register online at <http://congressonevangelism.org/>.

Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land - Jan. 24

Travel with Bishop Gwinn on a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 2011. Depart on Jan. 24 and visit all the holy sites, worship together, experience the teachings of Bishop Gwinn, and walk where Jesus walked. Contact Harold Salmon, Conference Director of Tour Ministries at 919-377-2950.

Winter Soulstice coming - Feb. 4-5

The North Carolina Academy for Spiritual Formation has announced that nationally-recognized author and speaker Phyllis Tickle will be featured at Winter Soulstice, a Friday night-Saturday retreat to be held at Saint Francis UMC in Cary, Feb. 4-5, 2011. Tickle will be presenting from her new book, "The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why." The Academy for Spiritual Formation is sponsored by The Upper Room, Nashville, TN and jointly sponsors the North Carolina 5-day Academy with the NC Conference.

Rethinking Worship & Song Event - March 1-3, 2011

A national event to introduce Worship & Song, a new collection of song and worship resources developed by The General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House has been announced for March 1-3, 2011 in Nashville, TN. The Worship & Song print and digital resources are scheduled for release in February 2011. The event will include worship, singing, and learning, and features workshops with Carlton Young, Marcia McFee, Mark Miller, and many others. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/bsb5FD>.

Caring for Creation Event at Lake Junaluska - March 31-April 3

Life in our world today is challenged by how we care for the gift of Earth given to us by God. The Christian faith challenges us to be caretakers of Earth. Caring for Creation helps members of faith communities learn how we can care of the Earth is often taken for granted. The Caring for Creation experience provides the Biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of the home, Earth. Early registration due by March 1. For details, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation/.

Change the World - May 14-15

Churches are encouraged to discern ways for participation in the second Change the World event planned for the weekend of May 14-15. This is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service - locally and globally. For more information, visit the Change the World web page at UM Communications at <http://bit.ly/aWWVIE>.

Annual Conference - June 2011

The 2010 Annual Conference voted to convene the 2011 conference in Raleigh at the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC). Part of the contract for the RCC is that if the Conference used at least 500 hotel rooms in the downtown area for at least one night during the conference, over \$20,000 in fees would be waived. Annual Conference members are being encouraged to rent a room at the following downtown hotels: Marriott Raleigh City Center, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, and Clarion Hotel State Capital. The Marriott is adjacent to the Convention Center, the Sheraton is across the street, and the Clarion, which is near Edenton Street UMC, is about five blocks from the Center.

Arrangements have been made for 200 rooms and a special rate of \$109 plus tax per night at both the Marriott and Sheraton and 100 rooms at \$89 plus tax per night at the Clarion.

"It is possible for anyone staying at one of the three designated hotels to park their car the first day of conference and not use it again until the end of conference. The Raleigh R Bus Line, which is free, circulates in the downtown area on a 15 minute cycle. One of the pickup sites is near the Clarion," noted Rev. Jerry Bryan, Conference Secretary. "A number of restaurants are within walking distance from the Convention Center."

When calling to make a reservation at any of these hotels, ask for The United Methodist Church group rate.

- Marriott Raleigh City Center - Make reservation by May 14, 2011; (919) 833-1120; Rate: \$109.00 + tax; Online: Go to the link below and adjust the dates accordingly. This will automatically provide the group rate of \$109. <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/rdumc-raleigh-marriott-city-center> OR Phone: 866-260-1270 and refer to "The United Methodist Church" group in June 2011 or refer to the 3-letter code "UMC".
- Sheraton Raleigh Hotel - Make reservation by May 16, 2011; (919) 834-9900; Rate: \$109.00 + tax
- Clarion Hotel State Capital - Make reservation by May 11, 2011; (919) 832-0501; Rate: \$89.00 + tax

conference CALENDAR

December

2	Church & Society meeting
4	UM Building Open House 1-4pm, Garner
6	Conference Connectional Table
7	Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
24-27	Christmas Holiday (UMB Closed)

January

2	Agape Sunday
3	UM Building Closed for New Year's Holiday
16	Human Relations Sunday
19	Apportionment and Conference Advance Special Close-out Date
21	Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

Chaplains crucial to hospice care as need grows

By Vicki Brown *

As more and more people seek hospice care, chaplains have a crucial role to play in leading discussions about end-of-life spiritual and medical issues, panelists at a chaplains' convocation on hospice and palliative care said.

David Johnson, president of the Association of Professional Chaplains, told chaplains attending a meeting sponsored by the UM Board of Higher Education and Ministry that the hospice and palliative care focuses is the wave of the future.

Hospice and palliative care focus on caring and reducing disease symptoms rather than curing an illness. Palliative care is not limited to end-of-life care and can take place at the same time as curative care.

"Hospice care is where chaplaincy is going to grow. Are chaplains going to grow with the business, or are they going to be left behind?" Johnson asked the group meeting in September.

Panelists and workshop leaders addressed best practices for hospice chaplains, self-care, future trends of hospice care and engaging the community in discussion about end-of-life issues.

"We missed a giant opportunity to have those discussions during the health care reform debate," Johnson said. Instead of a serious discussion about how palliative and hospice care can improve the lives of the dying, the debate became about "death panels," he said.

A looming crisis

Johnson said people need to understand that hospice care is less expensive because people make peace with their own mortality.

He noted that the children of the Depression have the lowest birth rate, with children of baby boomers having the second-lowest. That means there will be far fewer children to care for aging baby boomers. "There is going to be a crisis in this country about caregiving," Johnson said.

According to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, an estimated 1.45 million patients received hospice care in 2008, and the median length of that care was 21.3 days. And hospice care may actually prolong the lives of some terminally ill patients. One study found that the mean survival of terminally ill patients who received hospice care



The Revs. Saul Espino (left) and Dick Stewart lead the processional at the conclusion of the United Methodist Chaplains' Convocation in Nashville, Tenn. Photo by Mike DuBose.

was 29 days longer than for non-hospice patients.

Sally Schwab, president of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, said that chaplains need to make themselves valuable members of the care teams. They can start by becoming good communicators.

"We in the medical establishment fail miserably in communication. If we can be effective communicators, we can do a better job," Schwab said. "Chaplains need to be concerned about how to be partners in symptom control, specifically related to pain." She urged chaplains to become knowledgeable about all resources that are available in their area.

"Develop your tool kit," she told them. "We need to be well versed in the resources needed by people facing the end of life. That is really our staple of service as well as meeting the spiritual needs of our patients."

Helping chaplains

The Rev. Saul Espino, the board's director of retreats and specialized ministries, said it was clear from the discussions about best practices the area of self-care is of vital importance for United Methodist chaplains serving in these stressful ministries.

"This is an ongoing process and (the board) will continue to offer retreats, convocations and workshops designed to help chaplains develop more effective practices," Espino said.

Further professional development is also a clear need, Espino said, adding that the Board of Higher Education and Ministry will continue providing clinical pastoral education scholarships to assist chaplains to meet the standards for certification with professional bodies.

God's vessels

Bishop Joe Pennel, a retired United Methodist bishop and author of "The Gift of Presence: A Guide to Helping Those Who Suffer," urged the chaplains not to neglect their own spiritual lives. He said they should practice interiority, sincerity and compassion.

"Even as God draws close to us through Jesus, so God might choose to grow close to others through us. It is our choice to be a vessel through which God can work," he said.

Interiority means practicing silent meditation, searching the Scriptures and going about work prayerfully, he said. "If we neglect this, we will do ministry in a hurried way. We can be tricked into spending time with the appearance of religion," Pennel said. "Practicing interiority helps us to see the world as God sees it, to see beyond our own agendas, and take the side of the poor, defenseless and sick."

* Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

MU president

continued from page 10

tal campaigns. From 1984 - 1989, Hancock served as executive director of the Boise State University Foundation in Idaho.

He provided leadership for the Foundation's Board of Directors, and directed all development activities, including special fund-raising campaigns, major gifts, corporate and foundation relations, and annual giving.

Prior to 1984, he served in advancement positions at Penn State University, Maryville College, and James Madison University.

Hancock earned a Bachelor of Arts in Russian studies and a master's degree in education from James Madison University in Virginia. He earned a Ph.D. in comparative and international education from the University of Virginia.

His dissertation was titled, "The Role of Philanthropy in the Development of British Higher Education during the Victorian Period (1851-1919)."

Dr. Hancock has traveled extensively throughout the US and abroad. In 1988, he received a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

In 1998, he received a Russell Mawby Fellowship at Oxford University, and in 1999, he received a Visiting Fellowship at the University of Auckland in New Zealand.

From 2005-2009, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne.

He has been active with the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

He and his wife, Debbie (a special education teacher), have five adult children: Jessie, Sarah, Ben III, Matthew, and Andrew, and two grandchildren.

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Christmas Reflections

In this season of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace,

may God make these fruits a reality in your life. Joyce and I wish for you a child-like spirit that is aglow with excitement and expectancy, a heart that overflows with an awareness of how much you are loved and how blessed it is to love, a joy that flows deep like a river, and a profound sense of Shalom—God's gift of inner-connectedness, wholeness and tranquility. This is also a season when we rejoice over you—laity and clergy alike. Your commitment, selflessness, and hunger to be more like Him shine brighter than the lights on our trees and warm our hearts more than the glowing embers of our fireplaces. So, we wish for you a Christmas like the Shepherds experienced in Bethlehem and the Wise Men experienced when they gazed upon the Holy One.



Al and Joyce Gwinn

A few special days remind all of God's intention for life: hope, love, joy, peace

By Judi Smith *

I love Christmas!

I love the sights, the sounds, the smells of something good in the oven. I love the cards, the carols, and the crèche with shepherd boys and patient cows. I love the music, the magic, the mystery of God becoming flesh. I love the lights, the laughter, and the look on people's faces when they stand before a lighted tree. I love the presents, the people, and the pressure to get things ready on time. I love the food, the frolic, the fun of keeping secrets and hiding gifts.

I love Christmas!

It seems to me that Christmas really is the best time of the year. Most everything around gets a red bow tied with long streamers. Doorways are lighted with bright white lights so that a wreath may be seen from the road. Ordinary trees and shrubbery come alive with lighted color, branches draped with lights.

We all try to make our surroundings and ourselves look a little better at Christmas: red jackets, vests, shiny clothes, and extra glitter.

It seems to me that Christmas brings out the best in most folks. Those who never entertain a thought for anyone else begin to think of what they can do for the mailman, the newspaper carrier, the family down the road who is having a hard time. People you haven't heard from all year will take time to send you a card with a handwritten greeting inside. A lot of people smile more and shed a tear or two over things they'd never notice any other time of year.

Our joys seem larger and our sorrows feel heavier at Christmas time. Perhaps this is why we seek out and plan parties, dinners, and get-togethers with other folks; we are able to share our joy, and the weight of our sorrows is lightened for a brief time.

Some folks you never see around the church will turn up one Sunday or two during December to participate in hymn-singing and candle-lighting. Parents who take a lackadaisical approach to children's activities will stop everything else to make sure their child is present for program/choir/pageant practice. Yes! Christmas brings out the best in most folks.

It seems to me that Christmas is God's way to tenderizing us.

When I see people who are constantly on the go, talking endlessly, stand in the cold, hushed in awe, before a live nativity scene; when I read that a doctor and hospital will donate their services so that a young man can have an operation enabling him to hear; when I see people who like bright lights and have forgot-

ten how to cry hold a small, lighted candle and wipe their eyes while singing "Silent Night, Holy Night"; when I see whole families, who haven't done much together all year, kneel at an old, wooden altar rail, hands out stretched to receive God's grace upon life in the form of bread and juice, then I know that God is at work to soften our tired, hard lives.

Oh, I know that at Christmas the days are still hard for many. Life can be difficult and people can be cruel. I know that colored lights and red bows and wreaths on doors do not mean that life inside that dwelling is as pretty as it appears.

I know that when Christmas has passed, the music of bells and songs has ended, and the trash is hauled away, that people will say they are glad to "get back to normal."

But I love Christmas.

I'm grateful that at least one month out of twelve God uses babies and sheep, red bows and pretty music, candles and cards, colored lights and laughter to soften us up. I'm grateful that God has carved out of every year a few special days to remind us of his intention for life—hope and love and joy and peace.

I'm grateful that for a few days every year we are glad to be silent, to bend our knees before an altar, to bow our hearts and heads in adoration of the Christ rather than ourselves and our creations.

Christmas really is the best time of the year. It is God's way of reaching His world and His creatures with the good news that life could be different from what we have made it. It is God's way of giving us, his creatures, the gift that keeps on giving—Jesus the Christ.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:4-5)

O yes! I love Christmas!

* The Rev. Judi J. Smith is pastor at Elizabeth UMC, Smithfield.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Top stories of 2010: Haiti, Call to Action	2
Delegation sizes set for 2012 Conferences	3
Bridge building is theme of RDNACM Heritage Day	4
February 2011 Bible Study	8-9
Young Clergy day apart	11

Cabinet helps build Ryan Epps children's home in Haiti



NC Conference Cabinet members on a Volunteers in Mission work team in Haiti gather for a group photo with others working on the Ryan Epps Home for Children dormitories, dining area and housing for the director and his family. In addition to the VIM team, led by Butch Huffman, were members of Compassion Alliance, a faith-based non-profit organization partnering with the Ryan Epps group to assemble the church and school; five members of the children's home board; and several members of the community.

By Yonat Shimron *

Bishop Al Gwinn's job is mostly cerebral. It involves a lot of mediating and encouraging, preaching and convincing.

So when he and the 16-member cabinet that governs the N.C. Conference of the United Methodist Church looked for an opportunity to do something physical, they weren't content with mere symbolism.

In mid-November, they hopped on a plane and spent the week adding siding, insulation and roofing to a new building that will become the

dormitory for the Ryan Epps Home for Children in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital.

The project, four years in the making, was launched by Helen Little, an 80-year-old woman from Clayton who has been visiting the island nation for nearly 25 years and encouraging Methodists and other Christians to help her start a home for boys and girls.

Little, a member of Horne Memorial UMC, wouldn't miss out on the opportunity to work alongside her bishop. So she joined the 22 member-delegation that swooped down on the little town of Michaud to help make her vision a reality.

Haiti has been much in the news

after the 2010 earthquake that devastated the Caribbean nation.

Recently, its people have seen another catastrophe: a cholera epidemic has claimed more than 2,200 lives. Religious groups have rushed in to raise money, clear the rubble and rebuild.

The North Carolina Conference contributed more than \$1 million in the days after the quake.

To many in the conference, Haiti is not just a struggling nation worthy of charity, it's a place that inspires a special bond. One of its pastors was killed when the Hotel Montana collapsed in Port-au-Prince during the January earthquake. The Rev. Sam Dixon was learning how the denomi-

nation could help leverage medical care for Haitians when he was pinned inside the building, trapped there for more than 55 hours. He died from his injuries.

The conference had dedicated a chapel in its new Garner headquarters to Dixon. The bishop's trip was another way to pay tribute to his life and mission - by helping the people of Haiti.

"You can listen in the news or read in the paper about the plight of poor, destitute people. But you really can't know what that's like until you encounter it for yourself. The journey is to be with the poor, and then to be

See "Cabinet helps build," page 6

Come, Lord Jesus, come and care for Haiti

By Leonard Fairley *

The UMVIM motto: "Christian Love in Action" was lived out on the shores of Haiti by the ministry cabinet of the North Carolina Annual Conference. We traveled to Haiti hoping to be a blessing but received the greater blessing.

"We've heard it all before," (especially after a mission trip), you might say. Sentiments such as these are used so often that they have become cliché, but they come closest to describing what was experienced as the team arrived in Port-Au-Prince on Nov. 15 and departed on Nov. 22.

The team was encouraged by both Bishop Al Gwinn and Butch Huffman, our UMVIM team leader, to always

seek the face of Jesus, but could the face of Jesus be recognized in the midst of such overwhelming poverty and devastation?

Could it be that Jesus was indeed the young boy running behind our luggage "tap-tap," for what appeared to be an eternity, eventually jumping upon the truck's bumper begging for food. He first spoke in Creole, and then in broken English—"Sister, brother, I am starving, please give me something to eat." Jesus' words from Luke 9:13 rang out with new meaning, "you give them something to eat."

The face of Jesus indeed had come to greet us in the gray dust floating from streets crowded with men, women and

See "Come, Lord Jesus, come," page 7

Top stories in 2010: Helping the people of Haiti, Call to Action

By Rich Peck *

United Methodists began 2010 praying, raising funds and recruiting volunteers to help the people of Haiti recover from a catastrophic earthquake. The year ended with church members trying to digest two massive surveys and five recommendations from the Call to Action team aimed at revitalizing the denomination.

Meeting in Panama, the church's top clergy leaders discussed the proposals and the importance of leading the denomination in change.

"What this means is that whatever goes forward, the Council (of Bishops) is committing itself...that yes, we are taking a stand and these are the levers to pull the church in the direction in which we feel the Spirit of God is calling us," said Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, the Call to Action steering team co-chair. "And that is toward more congregational vitality."

Also during the year, United Methodists worked to make disciples of Christ throughout the globe, launched a campaign to eradicate malaria deaths in Africa and prepared for the 2012 General Conference.

Bringing relief

The Jan. 12 earthquake that hit Haiti took 230,000 lives, injured an additional 300,000 and left 1 million homeless.

Six United Methodist officials were meeting in a Port-au-Prince hotel when the 7.0-magnitude quake trapped them under the rubble.

The Rev. Clint Rabb and the Rev. Sam Dixon, officials with the UM Board of Global Ministries, were pinned under the concrete structure for more than 50 hours. Dixon died of cardiac arrest before rescue workers could free him, and Rabb died a

day later in a Florida hospital.

Jean Arnwine, who was working with a United Methodist mission team at an eye clinic in Petit-Goâve, also died as a result of injuries from the quake.

The denomination immediately sent physicians and other first responders to the island, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief sent 350,000 health kits. Other United Methodists collected special offerings, performed benefit concerts and sponsored other fundraisers.

In the months since the disaster, UMCOR has assisted survivors and built a foundation for a large-scale, long-term recovery effort. United Methodists have donated more than \$40 million to the relief agency, and 3,000 people volunteered to help the injured and homeless.

United Methodists helped in the wake of other disasters. UMCOR provided emergency grants to the Methodist Church of Chile following an 8.8 magnitude earthquake; and worked with Church World Service to distribute tents and food after a monsoon flooded a fifth of Pakistan's land area. UMCOR also responded to the destruction caused by Tropical Storm Agatha in Central America.

In the United States, thousands of United Methodist volunteers aided families following floods in several Southern states and tornadoes in Oklahoma and Ohio. Five years after Hurricane Katrina, volunteers also continued rebuilding efforts along the Gulf Coast and responded to new needs caused by the 2010 oil spill.

"We lost church buildings and congregations, but we gained the church," Louisiana Bishop William W. Hutchinson said.

Change the World Weekend

United Methodists did not wait for disaster to strike to lend a hand in 2010. In late April, more than 100,000 people from more than 1,000 churches united for Change the



At the Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in Berlin, the assembly drafted 10 legislative proposals for the 2012 General Conference. To reflect the global nature of the event, worship and legislative sessions were conducted in each speaker's native language and all in attendance used translation equipment to participate. UMNS photo by Tom Schmidt.

World Weekend. Church members around the world fed the hungry, helped the homeless and visited the lonely. Volunteers stocked food pantries, cleaned school grounds, washed cars and renovated homes.

The church also launched the Imagine No Malaria campaign to raise \$75 million to eradicate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. The effort was kicked off April 15 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, when United Methodist leaders visited the village of Bongonga and volunteer workers hung 30,000 insecticide-treated mosquito nets in 8,000 homes.

Part of the United Methodist Global Health Initiative, the anti-malaria campaign serves as an entry point to larger health and poverty issues using the church's 250 clinics, hospitals and health-care stations in sub-Saharan Africa.

During the summer, the church announced a partnership with the Geneva-based Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, becoming the first faith-based organization to do so. The denomination capped its year in the fall by training 3,700 community health workers to deliver about 3 million mosquito nets to Sierra Leone homes, as part of a broader health campaign.

Churches have sponsored a variety of fundraising activities for Imagine No Malaria as well as Nothing But Nets, a related effort through the United Nations Foundation, The United Methodist Church and other partners to raise funds for insecticide-treated nets. During an Aug. 1 United Methodist service at the National Boy Scout Jamboree, Scouts gave \$17,000 for Nothing But Nets.

Membership, finance losses

The recession continued to affect giving to the denomination, as U.S. church membership declined. United Methodist churches in the 63 annual (regional) conferences of the United States contributed 84 percent of what the denomination budgeted to support ministries around the world in 2009. The total apportioned was \$150.3 million; \$126.3 million was collected.

U.S. membership dropped 1.01 percent to 7.77 million in 2008, the largest percentage decline since 1974, denominational data showed.

Despite these trends, United Methodist conferences in Africa reported significant gains, outpacing U.S. membership declines. Between

See "Top stories in 2010," page 5

Let's Journey To....

Wesley's England May 15 - 24, 2011

Join The Wesley Foundation on a tour of Wesley's England. Travel to York, Epworth, Coventry, Oxford, Bristol and London. Visit the Epworth Rectory, The New Room and Wesley's Chapel. Hear about the "Holy Club" and John Wesley's "heart-warming experience". Space is Limited - Register Today

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Delegation sizes set for General and Jurisdictional Conferences

Delegates from the North Carolina Conference to the 2012 General and Southeastern Jurisdictional Conferences will be elected when the Annual Conference meets in Raleigh June 15-18, 2011.

The North Carolina Conference will elect nine clergy and nine lay delegates, a total of 18, to General Conference and will elect nine more clergy and nine more lay delegates, a total of 36, to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Following procedures from past elections, an additional five clergy and five lay persons, are expected to be elected as alternates.

Conference Secretary Jerry Bryan was notified of the numbers to be elected by the General Conference secretary who determines them by using specifications in the denomination's book of laws, the Book of Discipline.

This is the third quadrennium in a row that the conference delegation has been reduced in size by one clergy and one lay delegate, for a total of two. In 2008, the NC Conference elected 20, 10 lay and 10 clergy, to General Conference. To that number, 20 more were elected to bring the jurisdictional del-

egation to 40. The 2004 delegation was 22 for General and a total of 44 for jurisdictional.

As specified in the Discipline, General Conference will have from 600-1000 delegates and the number from each conference will be based on the number of clergy members and professing members in the conference.

Of the 15 conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, only two - Holston and Red Bird Missionary - had no General Conference or jurisdictional delegate reduction. Three conferences (Florida, Virginia, and Western North Carolina) each had their total General Conference delegation reduced by four. The remaining 10 conferences, including North Carolina, each lost two General Conference delegates. The same loss applied to jurisdictional conference.

Annual Conference	2012 GC Delegation	Delegation Difference from 2008	2008 SEJ Delegation	Difference from 2008
Alabama-West Florida	12	-2	24	-4
Florida	22	-2	44	-4
Holston	14	no change	28	no change
Kentucky	12	-2	24	-4
Memphis	4	-2	8	-4
Mississippi	14	-2	28	-4
North Alabama	12	-2	24	-4
North Carolina	18	-2	36	-4
North Georgia	26	-2	52	-4
Red Bird Missionary	2	no change	4	no change
South Carolina	18	-2	36	-4
South Georgia	10	-2	20	-4
Tennessee	8	-2	16	-4
Virginia	26	-4	52	-8
Western North Carolina	22	-4	44	-8

NCC delegate selection to be made from nomination pool

Clergy and laypersons interested in being elected a delegate to General and Southeastern Jurisdictional Conferences should complete a nomination form on the conference website. The deadline for submitting a nomination is April 8.

Lay nominees will form the pool for selecting lay delegates and the clergy pool will be used for electing clergy delegates.

The forms, along with information on the nomination and election process are available at nccumc.org. From the home page, select Resources, then 2012 Delegate Nominations or select ministries and select the Conference Secretary section and then the 2012 Delegate Nomination forms.

NOTE: Only one page of the form can be used. Nominations using more than one page will be rejected.

Once completed on a computer connected to the Internet, click on the appropriate link near the top of the page. Lay nominations are submitted electronically to the Board of Laity, using the linking option on the form, and clergy nominations go to the Conference Secretary, also on using the linking option of the form.

Delegate requirements

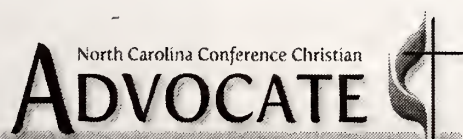
Laity nominees must have been a member of a local UM church within the bounds of the NC Conference for at least two years and active for four years. Persons under the age of 18 can be elected a delegate. Only lay members of the Annual Conference can vote. For clergy, only deacons and elders in Full Connection are eligible to be a clergy nominee.

Voting eligibility and election process

Only lay members of Annual Conference are eligible to vote for lay delegates. Eligible to vote for clergy are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements, and local pastors who have completed the course of study or an MDiv. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

After April 8, the nomination forms will be arranged alphabetically by names and then the pages will be numbered. The numbers will be used to designate a vote for a specific person using an electronic voting device. Lay members will receive a copy of the lay nominees, and clergy will receive the clergy book. Questions and be directed to the Conference Secretary at 800-849-4433, ext. 222.

♦ **For Annual Conference hotel reservation information - see page 10**

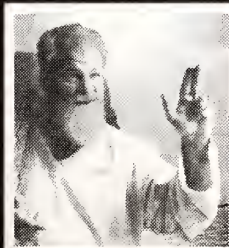


Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in separate JPEG or TIFF files. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

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After 34 years in pastoral ministry the Rev. Dr. Lee Weaver has retired and now travels across the country bringing exciting, Christ-centered preaching and monologues to groups.

Weaver is a veteran of both the dramatic and musical theatre; most recently playing the leading role of Don Quixote in "The Man of La Mancha" and Charlie Anderson in "Shenandoah."

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Bridge building is theme of second RDNACM Heritage Day

By Sylvia Collins-Ball *

The Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministries, Inc. of The United Methodist Church held their second annual "Heritage Day" event at Camp Grace in Fairmont late last summer.

The day's theme was "Bridge Building" as a reminder to the Native American churches of the opportunity available to connect the bridges of the past to the present so that the future will be steady and strong for the next generation.

A Spirit-Filled Walk-a-Thon. Money raised funds for mission outreach. Participating were 350 adults, children and youth from 12 of the 13 Native American churches in the conference.

Two "saints," one clergy and one lay person, from NCC Native American churches were honored for what they have given during their life to the "Kingdom of God." Hon-

ored were the Rev. Dr. Robert (Bob) Mangum and Mrs. Della Locklear.

During the presentation, Mangum was cited for his efforts over the last 50 years to help Native Americans in the Conference and Southeast Jurisdiction become empowered and live to their potential as educated and spirit-filled people.

Highlighted during presentation was the work done by Mangum during a march around the Capital in Raleigh to encourage legislators to end double voting in Robeson County.

"Mrs. Della" was honored for her passion for ministry "with the least of these." Included in other ways she is remembered is for her "smile that cheers anyone up immediately" and her broad arms which are most visible when someone is hurting or in need of a helping hand.

Citing Proverbs 31, she was described as "a wife with noble character," "worth far more than rubies," and for having the full confidence of



The Cooperative Ministries Youth Musical Team performed during the Heritage Day event last summer.

her husband and for all that she does for and with him. She is married to the Rev. Bill James

Also honored were the unsung heroes in local churches. Listed were: Ms. Ruby Cummings, Ms. Jessie M Mitchell, Curency Locklear, Ms. Erletha Jacobs, Mrs. Darlene Cotez, Coleman Dew, Mrs. Cattie Mae Hunt, Ms. Ella Mae Lowery, James Arnold Oxendine, James A. Jones, Luther Harbert Moore, and the Rev. Simeon F. Cummings. Named Native American church saints who have entered heaven triumphantly were: Ms. Debra Goins Huff and Nathan Robert Lowery.

Participants were encouraged to "remember the saints from our past who were bridge builders, and today we are all standing on the bridge they built. Their shoulders were strong and our lives are living proof of what can happen when our community locks arms and refuses to let go."

"Because of their commitment to God, "every generation has been privileged to rise higher than the past, stand firm in who they are as Native Americans, and grow intently in whose they are as children of God. We are a blessed generation because the saints of the past were not afraid to put a hammer and nail in their hand and build a bridge. We need some bridge builders today with the same determination."

Greetings were received from the Tribal Chairman, Purnell Swett who thanked the group for inviting him and other tribal leaders to participate in the day of unity building.

Others in the community who shared their stories, resources and opened their doors to the churches were: The Lumbee Tribe, Native Angles, Health Keepers, SEJANAM, Robeson County Church and Community Center, Lumber River Council of Government, Faith Based Outreach Tobacco Program, Sheriff's Department Majors Hunt and Harris, and special singing group, Youth in Christ.

* Sylvia Collins-Ball is coordinator for the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministries and pastor of Branch Street UMC in Lumberton

Anti-malaria campaign reaches people of Sierra Leone

By Kay Panovec *

Mosquito nets were piled high in stacks all over this southern Sierra Leone district, from a registration table outside a hospital to the top of women's heads as they carried the nets back to their villages.

The United Methodist Church joined the Sierra Leone Department of Health and other international partners to distribute more than 360,000 insecticide-treated bed nets

as part of a campaign to eliminate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015.

Getting to this point required tremendous time and effort to build trust in a nation still recovering from an 11-year civil war that ended officially in 2002.

"This was a very big project," said Beatrice Gbanga, United Methodist health coordinator of the Sierra Leone Annual (regional) Conference. "There were moments when we didn't know how we were going to get this done, but with

God, all things are possible."

As a nongovernment organization, The United Methodist Church worked with the Sierra Leone Department of Health and district health medical teams as well as winning the support of local chiefs. In Sierra Leone culture, chiefs rule the villages, and no activity takes place without their permission.

United Methodist leaders also trained 3,700 local Sierra Leone residents to assist with community education, registration and distribution and to help hang the nets in people's homes. Visit ImagineNoMalaria.org to follow the progress of this and other projects.

* Kay Panovec is executive director of new media at UM Communications.



A woman leaves The United Methodist Church's Mercy Hospital in Kulando, Sierra Leone, with mosquito nets for her family.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

Top stories in 2010: Helping Haiti, Call to Action from page 2

1998 and 2008, overall membership grew by 14 percent to about 11 million professing members. Still, denominational leaders are taking steps to address membership declines and improve congregational vitality.

Call to Action

A "Call to Action" team, created by the Connectional Table and the Council of Bishops, conducted two extensive studies and made five recommendations to increase the number of members and the vitality of churches:

Beginning in January 2011 and continuing for at least 10 years, concentrate on using the drivers of congregational vitality to build effective practices in local churches.

Dramatically reform clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation and accountability systems.

Measure progress in key performance areas using statistical information to learn and adjust approaches to leadership, policies, and use of human and financial resources.

Reform the Council of Bishops, with active bishops assuming responsibility/accountability for improving results in attendance, professions of faith, baptisms, participation in servant/mission ministries, benevolent giving and lowering the average age of church participants.

Consolidate program and administrative agencies, align their work and resources with church priorities and the commitment to build vital congregations, and reconstitute them with smaller, competency-based boards of directors.

Beginning in January, a seven-member Interim Operations Team, along with a staff executive, will guide the church in a two-year effort to implement the recommendations.

Changes and attempts to change structure

The 135 annual conferences around the world rejected constitutional amendments that would have paved the way to make the church in the United States one of several regional bodies throughout the world.

A Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of Church will continue to explore ways that lead to greater equality between U.S. conferences and churches in Africa, Asia and Europe. The 32-member group will also draft legislation for the 2012 General Conference that will provide greater sharing of power and the freedom to adapt the *Book of Discipline* to local contexts.

On a smaller scale, United Methodists drew a new map of U.S. structures following spring annual conference

sessions.

Clergy and lay members in New York, New England and Pennsylvania conferences said goodbye to Troy, North Central New York, Western New York, Wyoming and Central Pennsylvania conferences and hello to the Upper New York and the Susquehanna conferences.

Ministry study

The Ministry Study Commission is planning to ask the 2012 General Conference to eliminate guaranteed appointments for United Methodist elders. The commission says the guarantee is "a major factor contributing to mediocrity and ineffectiveness and emphasize the needs of the ministers rather than the mission of the church."

The Sustainability Advisory Group, a body examining church finances, supports the proposal. The group estimates there are 784 more clergy than there are positions. "The current UMC clergy appointment structure and compensation system are unaffordable and unsustainable, and too often do not achieve the desired results of placing competent and qualified leadership in local churches," said the group.

Gatherings tackle issues

In July, some 350 young people from more than two dozen nations traveled to a Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in Berlin.

The assembly drafted 10 legislative proposals for the 2012 General Conference. They denounced killings in Africa and the Philippines, asked for assurance that young people are represented on general boards and agencies, and sought legislation promoting alternatives to abortion.

While 6,500 women met at the St. Louis convention center for the United Methodist Women's Assembly, others participated via Skype. The April 29-May 2 assembly was streamed live on the Internet and, in a few cases, the women could interact with on-site participants.

Bishop Joaquina Nhanala of Mozambique spoke about ministering to vulnerable women. "My sisters, when we understand and realize how



A gravedigger walks among dozens of fresh graves in the children's section of the Panga Panga Cemetery in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Only one in five children in this city of 3 million survives to age five due to malaria. The Church launched the Imagine No Malaria campaign to raise \$75 million to eradicate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. The effort was kicked off in the Democratic Republic of Congo, when United Methodists hung 30,000 insecticide-treated mosquito nets in 8,000 homes. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

much God loves us, we translate that love in practical ways into our lives," she said.

Also in the news

The Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table, meeting last April in Manila, condemned extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and implications of abuses by the police and military against human rights workers, clergy and others. Bishops asked the U.S. government to pressure the Philippines to release 43 health workers who had been arrested by the army. On Dec. 1, a Filipino government official told representatives of the World Council of Churches the charges against the workers would be withdrawn.

Some United Methodists were proud and others angry when U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi praised the church for supporting legislation to provide medical coverage to uninsured Americans. More specifically, the United Methodist Board of Church and Society was the agency supporting reform, based on the denomination's resolutions on health care coverage.

In January, the denomination's University Senate gave a public warning and put an embargo on Ministerial Education Funds for Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. The Senate cited both for failure to transmit information. Claremont also was cited for failing to consult fully with church authorities about a reorientation of the school of theology to a university with schools of ministry. In June, after review, the senate rescinded the warning and

lifted the embargo.

In October, a 10-year dispute was ended when a District of Columbia Superior Court ruled that donations to the Board of Church and Society "were not restricted solely" to promoting temperance. At stake was about \$1 million in annual revenue.

In memoriam

United Methodist Daniel Terry was one of 10 aid workers killed in Afghanistan in August. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

Five retired United Methodist bishops died in 2010: William Dew, 74, former bishop of the Portland Area and the Phoenix Area; James K. Mathews, 97, former bishop of the New England Area and the Washington (D.C.) Area; Abel T. Muzorewa, 84, former bishop of Zimbabwe and the country's first black prime minister; Raymond H. Owen, 78, former bishop of the San Antonio Area; and James Thomas, 91, former bishop of the Iowa Area and the Ohio East Area.

Other passings included William Carter, Frances Smith, Lina McCord, Dorothy Height, John Procter, Mai Gray, Lillian Wilson, Dora Schwendtnner, Szaboles Prem, Peter Mutabazi, Della Waghiyi, Robert W. Huston, Daniel Aguila, Allan Kirton, Louise Duffey and Edward Fry.

* Richard Peck is a retired clergy member of New York Annual Conference and a freelance journalist living in Franklin, Tenn.

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Cabinet helps build children's home continued from page 1

able to reflect on what you're seeing and experiencing. And then, really and truly, there's the beginning of transformation."

Their trip Nov. 15-22 was the first time the conference's cabinet, which oversees the work of 836 churches, had traveled together to a developing country to help with a construction project. Gwinn, 67, had been on mission trips to Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Honduras and Jamaica. He has worked alongside former President Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity founder Millard Fuller building homes in the United States.

"The bishop jumped right in and did whatever needed to be done," said Al Carpenter of Clayton, chairman of the Ryan Epps Home for Children, a nonprofit created in North Carolina to raise money to build the school and church. "It was a really hard-working group."

Little, a homemaker and mother of three, became an advocate for Haiti after she was widowed in 1983 and began taking trips there. This last trip was her 50th. She named the home she helped start in honor of Ryan Epps, a Clayton teen and a student in her Sunday school class who died in a car crash in 2005.

Initially, she envisioned a two-story concrete building for the 40 boys and girls the home hoped to attract. A foundation had already been laid.

But after the earthquake the group



Jon Strother, Raleigh District superintendent, (standing) sings during the Sunday Launch Service for the Ryan Epps Home for Children Chapel. Bishop Al Gwinn (center) was the preacher. At the top center of the picture is a cross which was made from "hat channel" building materials.

determined they would need massive amounts of reinforced steel bars to make it earthquake-proof. Instead, they settled on two prefabricated metal buildings, the first housing a church and classrooms and the other a dormitory and dining room.

After the earthquake shattered their rented quarters, the 12 chil-

dren, mostly orphans who are already a part of the home, camped in tents.

In April 2010, during another trip, Little and several others helped erect the church and classroom building, where the children and home administrator live in makeshift quarters.

"These children are well-fed, well-trained and loved," said Little. "It's a very happy place. This is how Haiti will change: one child at a time."

On Sunday, the bishop delivered the first sermon in the church. He spoke directly to the orphans, telling them they were children of God, blessed and equipped to help in the work of redeeming the world.

But for Gwinn the trip was life-changing. Like everyone else, he

worked with his hands from dawn to dusk and stayed in a motel that was sparer than the cheapest American chain hotel. "My commitment in coming back from this journey is to live on less so I can give away more," he said.

As an example, Gwinn and his wife, Joyce, typically give each cabinet member a holiday gift. For 2010, he and his wife made a donation to buy windows for the Ryan Epps Home. They plan to dedicate one window in honor of each of them.

** Yonat Shimron is a staff writer for the News & Observer in Raleigh. The article was printed in the newspaper on Dec. 16, 2010 and is used with permission.*

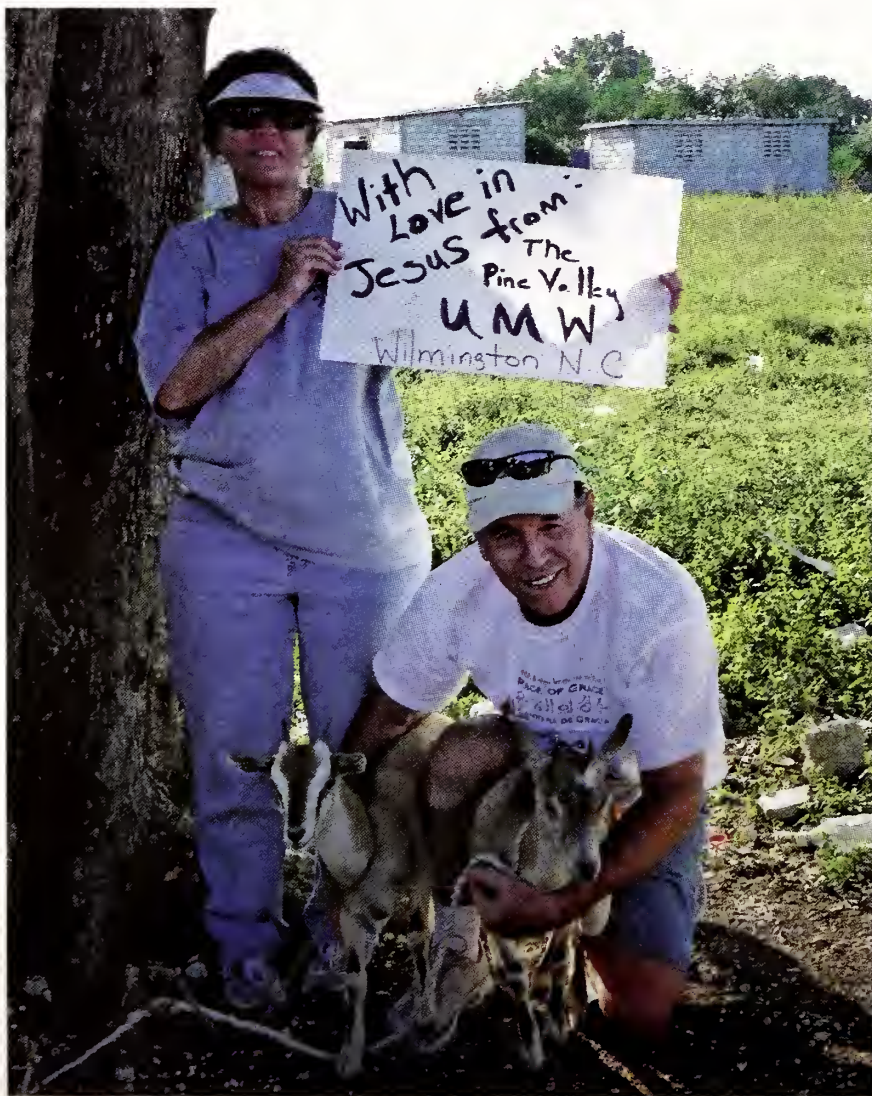
The gift of goats

In addition to constructing a dorm at the Ryan Epps Home for Children, 11 goats were given to struggling families in Haiti by conference members of the work team as a way to provide milk nourishment and for breeding. The selected families agreed to breed the goats and give the first born to another family. That family would continue the process. Pine Valley UMC's UMW in Wilmington gave two goats in honor of Bishop Al Gwinn and Francis Daniel, Wilmington District superintendent, and the UMM gave one goat. Emily Innes, conference lay leader, and Randy Innes, pastor of Pine Valley, gave a goat. Helen Little from Horne Memorial in Clayton and the person with the vision which became the children's home, provided seven goats from gifts she had received. The goats were purchased in Haiti. Each goat cost \$60.

Anyone wishing to contribute a goat can send a check for \$60, payable to Ryan Epps Home and designated for "goats," to Ryan Epps Home, c/o Al and Valerie Carpenter, 929 Mulberry Road, Clayton, NC 27520.

LEFT: Emily Innes and Bishop Al Gwinn

RIGHT: Sam Wynn



Come, Lord Jesus, come continued from page 1

children many still living in the "tent communities" we'd seen on television news broadcasts. One could not help but make the naïve wish of suddenly possessing a magic wand to change all this, but one simple prayer was whispered "COME, LORD JESUS, COME!"

"Come" Jesus did each day we drove up to the wrought-iron gates of angels wings at the entrance of The Ryan Epps Home for Children.

The children's home sits in a valley like an oasis in a desert waiting for weary travelers.

It was indeed refreshing to arrive in the early mornings greeted by children whose smiles melted your heart, and tiny lips touched your cheeks with a kiss!

It was amazing to witness the difference in the eyes and demeanor of the children living at the Ryan Epps home, compared to those we'd daily witness walking the dusty trash-laden streets of Haiti. It was truly like night and day.

What a joy to see each team member interact with these amazing children. It became easy to understand why Helen Little ("mother Teresa with an attitude") has made the trip to Haiti well over 50 times.

No disease (cholera notwithstanding), no natural disaster, no national disruption, has ever stopped God from seeing about God's children, and we were grateful that God chose to use us (the over-the-hill gang) to represent kingdom work. I am sure the team will tell me to speak for myself on the over-the-hill gang stuff!

We certainly didn't work like an over-the-hill gang. Bishop Gwinn couldn't even slow us down, and we definitely could not slow him down. We even worked one extra day on Saturday for heaven's sake.

God in the creator's wisdom matched us with a deeply passionate and compassionate group of Christian young men devoted to sharing their gifts of construction expertise in places of natural disasters around the world. However, the greater gift was their constant witness to Jesus Christ as Lord even in the midst of poverty, cholera, and political unrest. Jesus was present and in charge at all times. It was definitely a blessing to be able to work alongside the "Compassion Alliance" team of Paul, Bryan, Clay and Tim.

They truly kept us up on all of the construction lingo—"hat channel" (a piece of metal that looks like a hat, used for connecting various parts of the building) is a new term that we shall not soon forget.

Come Jesus did in the gift of goats given by Pine Valley UMC in the

Wilmington District. The entire surrounding village appeared to witness the sharing of this gift, including a little boy with the best view in the house Zacchaeus-style.

Come Jesus did in the gift of a well flowing with clean water pumped and shared by the village. Come Jesus did in clothes loaded on trucks while a pastor and his son praised God for items we often take for granted. Come Jesus did in the spirit-led devotions, and reflections shared by the team after supper.

Come Jesus did in the night's rest of tired, aching muscles sleeping with the healing knowledge that somehow God was able to use even us to make a difference in his name.

Come Jesus did in nuts, bolts, insulation and metal transformed into a dormitory before our eyes as we stared in amazement at what God can accomplish through God's people.

Indeed, Jesus showed up in our worship in the beautiful songs sung by The Ryan Epps Children's choir—the girls dressed in beautiful dresses with hair bows and socks to match.

The "hat channel" cross constructed in the gable of worship buildings roof left no doubt about the presence of Jesus Christ among us in this simple yet holy space.

Bishop Gwinn preached a powerful sermon tailored to the children and yet somehow the Word reached and touched us all that day.

Come Jesus did as the team shared a very tender moment at the Hotel Montana the place (as Bishop Gwinn reminded us) where Sam Dixon made his entry into the kingdom of heaven. I think the entire team will remember the white doves that appeared as we each reflected on Sam's great love for the people of Haiti.

I hope that each of you will be able to feel my struggle to find adequate words to describe the overwhelming joy, honor, and privilege to serve alongside our brothers and sisters in Haiti with such a wonderful team from our conference. I dearly love each one of them.

We were especially lifted by the prayers of our team members who could not travel with us. We could certainly feel their prayers as they kept each member of our team before the Lord. We traveled to Haiti to be a blessing but received the greater blessing. If that is cliché, I'll take it every time.

** The Rev. Leonard E. Fairley, Rockingham District Superintendent, was part of the cabinet team that served in Haiti.*

Doves take flight

Cabinet members on a work team to Haiti, paused for a time of prayer at the site of the collapsed Hotel Montana. Sam Dixon, a member of the conference and director of UMCOR, was killed from the collapse after an earthquake. During the service, a lone dove flew to a fence near the group, a location overlooking Port Au Prince. At the conclusion of the prayer, several more doves joined the lone dove and flew from the location. In the photograph below are (L-R): Sam Wynn, Fayetteville District superintendent; Chuck Cook, Goldsboro District superintendent; Jon Strother, Raleigh District superintendent; Tim Russell, assistant to the bishop; Bishop Gwinn; Francis Daniel, Wilmington District superintendent; Emily Innes, conference lay leader; Carol Goehring, conference executive director of connectional ministries and church revitalization; Leonard Fairley, Rockingham District superintendent; and behind him, Dennis Goodwin, New Bern District superintendent. Absent when the photo was taken were Gray Southern, Durham District superintendent; and Richard Stone, Elizabeth City District superintendent.



More help is needed

There are still supply needs as work continues to complete the inside of the dormitories, dining area, and staff housing building.

Persons, groups, or churches who would like to contribute to this endeavor can refer to the needs list provided at <http://www.ryanepphome.com/news>

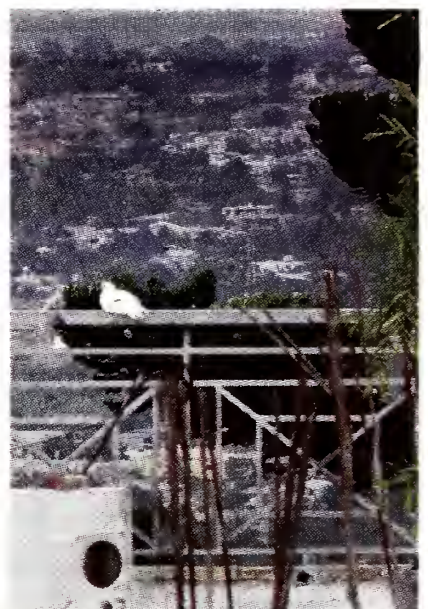
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Donations to the children's home can be placed in the offering plate of any NC Conference United Methodist church or mailed to: NC Conference-Raleigh Area, P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260-0053. Please note "Advance #500245" on the memo line of the check.

100% of gifts made goes to the Ryan Epps Home for Children, a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

February *adult* BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* series.

February 6, 2011

Text: Mark 8:27-9:1

"Jesus Is the Messiah"

"R U OK?" "K. I H8 2 C U." "?4U" "K." "14AA41?" "AITR" "ALOL."

In this day of text messages and tweeting, folks are finding all sorts of ways to communicate in as few keystrokes as possible. Perhaps older folks—count me in—tend to go on at great length when what is really wanted/needed is a simple, straightforward answer.

In this week's study lesson, Jesus asks a question and gets a direct and brief answer. "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." (Mark 8:29) How would you answer that question? If someone inquired of you, "Who is Jesus?"—how would you reply?

A quick (and unsystematic) look at a few hymns in *The United Methodist Hymnal* reveals these answers: Hidden source of calm repose, all-sufficient love divine, help and refuge from my foes, salvation, Stem of Jesse's Rod, our King, the Lord, the Crucified, risen Lord, King of creation, living God, our Savior, Way-Truth-Life-Light-Feast-Strength-Joy-Love-

Heart, Man of Sorrows, Son of God... well, you get the idea.

No one term seems to capture all that can be said about Jesus.

Peter's answer in Mark 8:29 is at the core of answering the "Who is Jesus" question. You are the Messiah (NRSV). You are the Christ (NIV). You are the Anointed One (FBJ).

From our twenty-first century Christian perspective, this seems like an announcement of the obvious. Of course, Jesus is the Messiah!

Truth to tell, however, Jesus was not the first teacher-prophet-healer who was thought to be the promised One of God.

The claim had been made for others. That's probably why Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.

That term had been bantered about with lots of misunderstandings and our Lord did not want to add to that confusion.

It has been said that no answer is as important as how one answers the question "Who is Jesus?" Have you got a simple, straightforward answer? "OMG" might be a start.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The New Being* (Scribners), Paul Tillich wrote, "...Christians assert that the 'Coming One' has already come...The Christians feel blessed

because they have seen the presence of the saving power within the world and history."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Lord Jesus. By whatever name we call You, we claim Your presence as real and as now. Come, Messiah. You bring to fullness what has been promised..."

February 13, 2011

Text: Mark 9:2-13

"This Is My Beloved"

What is it about clouds?

Biblical cloud images appear again and again anytime the writer wants to make sure that we understand that God is present.

God puts a rainbow in the clouds to remind God of the covenant between God and the earth (Genesis 9:13).

The Israelites were led by God as they escaped from Egypt, a pillar or cloud by day to set the way (Exodus 13:21).

God wanted to speak to Aaron and Miriam, so God came in a pillar of cloud (Numbers 12:5).

The Son of Man will come on a cloud (Luke 21:27).

The Lord's harvest of judgment comes from one who sits on a cloud (Revelation 14:14).

Our Lord's ascended to heaven on a cloud (Acts 1:9).

One biblical writer emphasized God's presence among God's people by referring to the saints as "a cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1).

Then, there is this text we study this week: the transfiguration of Jesus, with a voice speaking from a cloud (Mark 9:7).

What is it about clouds?

Clouds are kind of ordinary events. Do you suppose the biblical insight might be that God shows up in the ordinary?

Think about the joke for which the punch line is "But I sent you two boats and a helicopter." (If you cannot recall this joke, call a friend and ask for help.)

God works God's grace through the ordinary. For example, faucet water for baptism and Welch's from the grocery store for the Lord's Supper.

That is part of the meaning of the Incarnation: God's becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14).

Ordinary. Clouds also sometimes keep us from seeing all that can be seen. There is a mystery about God beyond which we cannot see.

After all, this is the One who said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8a).

This is the One about whom John wrote, "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18).

The cloud may well be a metaphor for the hiddenness of God, the "otherness" of God, the mystery of God.

There's another thought about clouds. Look at the story in 1 Kings 18:41-46, an account of a drought.

The cloud (verse 44) became a sign that rain was coming, that the drought was going to be broken.

Clouds may portend something that is about to happen.

In fact, Jesus acknowledged how folks could predict rain based on the clouds (Luke 12:54).

So, clouds may be a way of pointing to the future.

Some of the above...all of the above...think about these ideas as you study Mark 9:7.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Laurence Stookey (*Calendar*, Abingdon) wrote: "If the conversation on the mountain points to the crucifixion, the glistening appearance of Jesus prefigures the resurrection."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of mystery and revelation..."

February 20, 2011

Text: Mark 10:35-45

"Jesus Came to Serve"

The word is *diakonos*.

The Son of Man came to be *diakonos* (Mark 10:45). Translators have had a field day trying to get the right word in English.

The King James Version says the Son of Man came "to minister." The New Revised Standard Version says the Son of Man came "to serve."

Edgar Goodspeed says that the Son of Man came "to wait on other people." Kenneth Taylor says that the Son of Man came "to help others."

The Contemporary English Version says the Son of Man came "to be

See "Bible Study," page 9

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February Adult Bible study *continued from page 8*

a slave." James Strong says the Son of Man came "to be an attendant."

This word *diakonos* is from the same family of words that gets translated "deacon."

One of the symbols of the office of a deacon (in United Methodism) is a towel and basin, a reminder of Jesus' washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:5). It is doing what needs to be done for others.

An old gospel song carries this same theme: "Others, Lord, yes others, Let this my motto be, Help me to live for others, That I may live like Thee." That's the way of Jesus' love—agape love: it is self-sacrificing that others might live.

These words from Jesus (Mark 10:45) came in response to the expectation of James and John that following Jesus carried with it certain privilege and place.

We are a bit more subtle than they (Mark 10:37) is asking Jesus for privilege and place.

One of the trickiest ways of asking for special recognition from Jesus is trying to be more humble than our neighbor. Jesus asks us to serve, not wallow in self-deprecation.

Caution: if you have trouble accepting a compliment, it could be a sign of "I-can-be-more-humble-than-you", a common form of pride.

Caution: if you have trouble letting other people help you, it could be a sign of another form of pride, "I-am-so-unworthy-that-I-cannot accept help."

Caution: if you—no, I'll leave that one out...it convicts me of false pride!

This thing of being a servant—*diakonos*—can itself become a source of temptation. But it is clear that our Lord wants us to work at it!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In his book *The Orders of Ministry in The United Methodist Church* (Abingdon), John Harnish has written: "Servant Ministry and Servant Leadership: These terms reflect a theme that undergirds the new ordering of ministry: an emphasis on service rooted in baptism as a basic element of all ministry...not just a primary representation, but the primary form of Jesus Christ's ministry in God's name."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Servant of the servants..."

February 27, 2011

Text: Mark 13:14-27

"Coming of the Son of Man"

Let me start with a side trip. You might call it a theological rabbit that I am chasing.

The Book of Revelation is the kind of writing that has occurred in time of great persecution. The book is filled with images that seem quite wild to us (beasts, dragons, multi-horned creatures, angels, trumpets, thrones, etc.) but which would have made good sense to those who first heard the accounts. Such writing is often pessimistic because times are tough; such writing usually includes a word of encouragement to those in distress.

Now, back to this week's lesson.

These verses from Mark have the characteristics of the kind of expression found in the Book of Revelation.

It is called "apocalyptic" (Greek for "uncover") and this portion of Mark is sometimes referred to as "Little Apocalypse."

Jesus is speaking in the kind of

imagery and visions that show up in apocalyptic literature. Perhaps he had encountered that style of speech and writing in his study of the Hebrew prophets.

All of the text seems to be doom and gloom until the announcement comes that "they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26).

(Some editors of the text have placed "the Son of Man coming in clouds" in quotation marks because the phrase so nearly reflects the words of Daniel 7:13.)

Any way you slice it, Jesus is giving assurance that God is going to win and God's people will be saved.

Think of it like this: because you are going to be away from home during an important basketball game, you record the game to watch when you get home.

Before you get to watch the video of the game, someone tells you that your favorite team won.

Now you can watch the ups and downs of your team with confidence, because you know that in the end they will win.

That is Jesus' word to his followers: when the journey is over—and it will be rough—at the end of the story, He will have won.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Stanley Grenz (*What Christians Really Believe and Why*, Westminster John Knox) wrote "What lies at the boundary between our present and God's future? Christians believe that the central event marking the end of history as we know it is the return of the risen and exalted Christ. We can't determine all that this means or exactly how Jesus' return will occur...We do know that Jesus' glorious return will mark our resurrection, which comprises God's final 'No!' to death..."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Hear us pray, Lord, that 'soon and very soon, we are going to see the King. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King!'" (Based on hymn 706, *United Methodist Hymnal*.)

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calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Winter Soulstice coming - Feb. 4-5

The North Carolina Academy for Spiritual Formation has announced that nationally-recognized author and speaker Phyllis Tickle will be featured at Winter Soulstice, a Friday night-Saturday retreat to be held at Saint Francis UMC in Cary, Feb. 4-5, 2011. Tickle will be presenting from her new book, "The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why." The Academy for Spiritual Formation is sponsored by The Upper Room, Nashville, TN and jointly sponsors the North Carolina 5-day Academy with the NC Conference.

Children's Ministry Forum - Feb. 22-24

Children's Ministry leaders in large United Methodist churches will receive new skills, fresh understandings and revived energy at the 2011 Children's Ministry Forum on Feb. 22-24 in San Antonio, TX.

Sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), the event, "Remembering Our Story," will focus on remembering, rejoicing, renewing and responding as participants experience the Biblical stories in new ways and develop multiple tactics to teach the stories to children.

Although the event is designed for children's ministry leaders in large United Methodist congregations with more than 250 people in worship, representatives from smaller congregations also are welcome to attend.

A series of pre-conference seminars will be available on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, Feb. 21-22.

Registration fee is \$275 and includes dinner on Tuesday and lunch on Wednesday and Thursday. One-day commuter registration is \$125 each day. Fees for each pre-conference seminar range from \$35 to \$75.

Registration is limited, and the deadline is Feb. 18 for the forum and Feb. 1 for a special hotel rate. For more information, go online to www.gbod.org/cmf, or contact: Connie Schmutz by e-mail at cschmutz@gbod.org or by phone at (877) 899-2780, ext. 1761.

Native American Retreat - Feb. 24-26

The 10th Annual Native American Leadership Retreat will be Feb. 24-26 at Lake Junaluska. This is an enriching experience of spiritual growth and nurture in a cultural context through challenging preaching and seminars, worship and fellowship. This year's theme is "Trail of Hope: Removal to Restoration." Learn more at <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/native-american-retreat/>.

Camp Ministry Sunday - Feb. 27

Local churches are encouraged to reserve Feb. 27 to celebrate the ministry of NC Conference United Methodist Camps—Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee, and Rockfish—where lives are transformed each and every day through the love of Christ. Camp Sunday celebration materials will be available at www.ncumcamps.org by Feb. 1. To request bulletin inserts, a speaker or summer camp brochures contact dail@ncumcamps.org.

Worship & Song Event - Mar. 1-3

A national event to introduce Worship & Song, a new collection of song and worship resources developed by The General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House has been announced for March 1-3 in Nashville, TN. The Worship & Song print and digital resources are scheduled for release in February 2011. The event will include worship, singing, and learning, and features workshops with Carlton Young, Marcia McFee, Mark Miller, and many others. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/bsb5FD>.

Caring for Creation - Mar. 31-Apr. 3

Life in the world today is challenged by how to care for the gift of Earth given to all by God. The Christian faith challenges all to be caretakers of Earth. Caring

for Creation helps members of faith communities learn how to take care of the Earth that is often taken for granted.

The Caring for Creation experience provides the Biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of the home, Earth. Early registration due by March 1. For details, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation/.

Change the World - May 14-15

Churches are encouraged to discern ways for participation in the second Change the World event planned for the weekend of May 14-15. This is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service - locally and globally. During the May weekend, United Methodist churches are encouraged to create and participate in a service or fundraising event that helps bring about positive change, whether it's cleaning up school grounds, renovating homes or getting involved in global health issues like malaria. Churches can take advantage of existing ministries or initiate a new outreach event. For more information, visit the Change the World web page at UM Communications at umcom.org/changetheworld.

Annual Conference - June 15-18

The 2010 Annual Conference will be held in Raleigh at the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC) June 15-18.

An agreement with downtown merchants and hotels could result in the conference receiving \$20,200 if at least 500 hotel rooms are used by conference members on one night of the conference. The hotels are: Marriott Raleigh City Center, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, and Clarion Hotel State Capital.

The Marriott is adjacent to the Convention Center, the Sheraton is across the street, and the Clarion, which is near Edenton Street UMC, is about five blocks from the Center.

Arrangements have been made for 200 rooms and a special rate of \$109.00 plus tax per night at both the Marriott and Sheraton and 100 rooms at \$89.00 plus tax per night at the Clarion. The rates at each hotel will change after the designated number of rooms are rented.

The Raleigh R Bus Line, which is free, circulates in the downtown area on a 15 minute cycle. One of the pickup is near the Clarion.

When calling one of these hotels to make a reservation, ask for The United Methodist Church group rate.

- Marriott Raleigh City Center - Make reservation by May 14, 2011; (919) 833-1120; Rate: \$109.00 + tax; Online: Go to the link below and adjust the dates accordingly. This will automatically provide the group rate of \$109. <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/rdumc-raleigh-marriott-city-center> OR Phone: 866-260-1270 and refer to "The United Methodist Church" group in June 2011 or refer to the 3-letter code "UMC".
- Sheraton Raleigh Hotel - Make reservation by May 16, 2011; (919) 834-9900; Rate: \$109.00 + tax
- Clarion Hotel State Capital - Make reservation by May 11, 2011; (919) 832-0501; Rate: \$89.00 + tax

DEATHS

EDENS, Allen, Jr. (Fayetteville district: retired) died on Nov. 24. A memorial service was held Nov. 29, at Wesley Heights UMC.

METHVIN, Pauline, wife of Rayford Methvin (Raleigh district: retired), died Dec. 3. The service of resurrection was held on Dec. 7, at Holland's UMC.

LEATHERMAN, Wilma, wife of Harold Leatherman (Rockingham district: retired), died on Dec. 10. Services were held Dec. 12, at First UMC in Lincolnton.

Outer Banks churches host Friendship International

By J. Roger Dill *

Bethel on Roanoke Island at Wanchese and St John on Hatteras Island at Avon recently were blessed by the music and witness ministry of A New Song. Seven young adults make up the group that travels on behalf of Friendship International which conducts its ministry in Eastern Europe, Great Britain, South America and the US.

This music tour is one of the ways Friendship International finances youth camps to bring the message of Christ in mostly third world countries. The singers from Hungary and Romania shared their outstanding musical talent and vibrant witness to their faith as well as highlighting the various evangelical ministries of Friendship International.

Over \$1500 was contributed toward their ministries in response to the ministry they shared in these two churches.

* Roger Dill is pastor of Bethel and St John Churches in the Elizabeth City District.



Young Clergy Day Apart

Conference young clergy (40 and under) were invited to attend the first Bishop's Day Apart for Young Clergy on Dec. 7 at the United Methodist Building in Garner. The day included worship, dialogue between Bishop Gwinn and young clergy, and presentations from young clergy colleagues. Much of the discussion centered on statistics that show a low retention rate for young clergy and ways the North Carolina Conference can nurture and support young clergy to stay in ministry. (Photos by LeeAnne Thornton)



Dan Glover (left), one of the discipleship workshop instructors, and Carol Goehring, director of conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization, discuss the workshop presentation during a break. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Connectional Ministries Workshop

Discipleship pathway offers process for deepening faith

By Carol Goehring *

Jesus consistently met people where they were, and yet he cared too much to leave them there. Zaccheus was met with warmth and acceptance, and his transformation was deep and lasting because of the grace he received from Jesus. Nicodemus, Peter, Andrew, James and John, the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene, and Martha, also were shown hospitality and then moved toward newness of life and faith because of Jesus' regard for them.

In a recent workshop on Discipleship, Dan Glover and Claudia Lavy, co-founders of Deepening Your Effectiveness, Inc., introduced a pathway of discipleship, a process for moving people of a congregation toward more fully committed followers of Jesus. The workshop, sponsored by Connectional Ministries, was offered on two consecutive days to allow lay and clergy of the North Carolina Conference two options for participation. More than 90 persons attended the workshops at the United Methodist Building in Garner.

Glover and Lavy identified six stages of development in a Christian believer's life and the opportunities for the church to provide systems for growth through these stages toward spiritual maturity. Each stage also has inherent barriers, and when understood, can be addressed in the process of growth. As believers are welcomed into the faith community, it is important to provide instruction in biblical principles and stories, and practical application of scripture to one's life. With understanding of one's purpose and call, another stage of development requires a more intimate fellowship and accountability, a safe environment for discussion of one's spiritual questions.

Small groups often provide that safe environment and foster the trust that encourages personal transformation and the generation of ministry ideas. Later stages of growth may be nurtured in one on one relationship, or mentoring, as believers live out their call and purpose with support of the Holy Spirit and the congregation.

* The Rev. Carol Goehring is executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

conference CALENDAR

January

- 2 Agape Sunday
- 3 Provisional written work/ DVDs due
- UM Building closed for New Year's Holiday
- 13 Unity Dialogue 6 p.m., UMB
- 16 Human Relations Sunday
- 19 Apportionment and Advance Special Close out Date
- 21 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 24-Feb. 3 Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land

February

- 1 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 3-4 Advanced Academy of Christian Witness
- 4-5 NC Academy for Spiritual Formation Winter Soulstice Retreat w/ Phyllis Tickle
- 7 Conference Connectional Table Meeting
- 13 Boy Scout Sunday
- Methodist Home for Children Sunday
- 14-18 Provisional interviews
- 15 Full Connection written work/ DVDs
- 17 Employment Practices Liability Basics, 10 a.m., UMB
- 27 Camp Ministry Sunday

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

Monitoring and Accountability evaluates focus, work of committee

The Conference Monitoring and Accountability Committee met on Nov. 29 at the United Methodist Building. The purpose of the gathering was to re-evaluate the focus of the committee and to question whether the work of the committee is helping the conference become a body where there is full and equal participation of all racial and ethnic groups in the total life of the conference.

The Rev. Dr. Edgardo Colon-Emeric, Assistant Research Professor of Theology and Hispanic Studies; Director of the Hispanic Studies Program, and a member of the North Carolina Conference, was invited to share his experi-

ences as the chair of the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and to reflect with the committee from a Biblical and theological perspective. Colon-Emeric guided the discussion with scriptures from Revelation, Hebrews, and Matthew.

One main point of the discussion was that the Kingdom of God will be a place where persons from "every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev. 7:9) will be welcomed by God. To truly be the body of Christ, the Church must whole-heartedly seek this unity.



Edgar Colon-Emeric



(L-R, facing front) Patty Stricklin, Paul Lee, Linda Harris, Edgar Colon-Emeric, Julia Webb Bowden, Para Drake, Ed Dew, Annie Fairley, Jane Johnson, Seong Eom, and William Price. (Photos by Derek Leek)

Communications committee explores online meeting options, offers assistance to other groups

Finding time for a meeting is not always easy, especially hours of drive time is needed to attend.

But, today's technology has brought communication another option.

The Conference Communications Committee has been looking at many ways to hold online meetings and recently held their first online meeting with Adobe Connect.

Adobe Connect is a web conferencing solution for online meetings, eLearning, and webinars. It allows chat, voice/video, screen sharing, conference calling and many other features for more advanced group dynamics.

"For a first time meeting [with Adobe Connect] I feel it went very well," said Linda Smith, a participant in the Communications meeting.

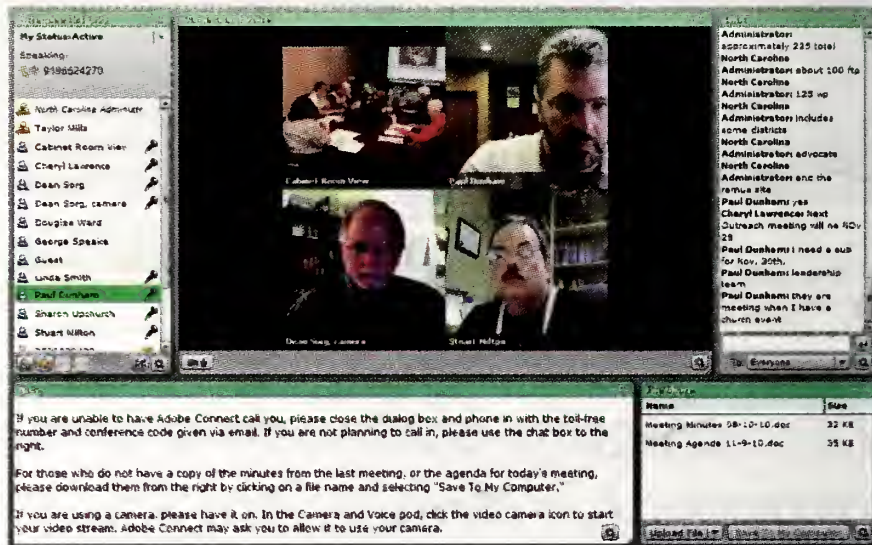
This type of meeting allows for good stewardship of money and time.

If more committees continue to adopt a web conferencing style, the Conference could save dollars in travel costs and participants could save both time and wear and tear on vehicles.

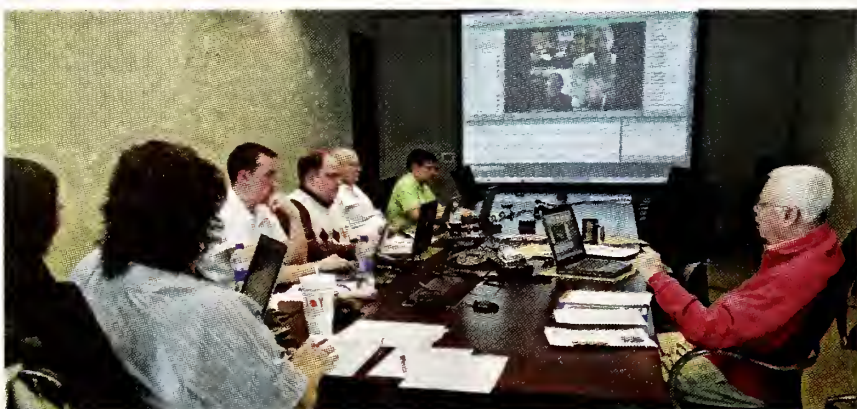
Although the technology aspect of the meeting went well, the committee mentioned how a face-to-face connection was missed.

This type of conferencing may not completely replace face-to-face meetings, but it does show how technological advances have made the worries of finding time to drive to meetings a little less worrisome.

Conference Communications is offering assistance to other commissions and committees interested in holding webinar meetings.



A screen displayed committee members participating in the webinar. One camera was used with the group in Garner (top left) and participants in other locations used cameras on their computer. Beginning in the lower left is Dean Sorg in Bath, members in Garner, Paul Dunham in Farmville, and Stuart Milton in Hurdle Mills. Cheryl Lawrence in Rougemont participated but did not use a camera. On the left side of the screen is a list of everyone logged into the meeting, and on the right are written questions from committee members. The bottom of the screen contains meeting notes. A PowerPoint presentation, a text file, and other content can be loaded on the screen for members to review. (Screen capture by Derek Leek)



Communications Committee members use their computers during a webinar meeting with other members in three other locations. Around the table (L-R) LeeAnne Thornton, Linda Smith, Derek Leek, Taylor Mills (chair), George Speake, and Joe Parker (vice chair). Bill Norton, conference communications director took the photograph during the meeting.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming events in NC Conference	3
Celebrate Camp Sunday	7
Cyberchurches: Use technology to share the good news ...	8
March Adult Bible Study	10-11
Collards, Collards, and More Collards!	12

New approaches to old challenges offered through conference

By Flo Johnston *

Coaching from the conference office is a new twist in the North Carolina Conference. A new approach to an old challenge. Not a "program" but a "process." An attempt to help congregations and ministers step back and take a look at how they are doing the business of ministry with emphasis on what they can do, not what they can't do, according to Carol Goehring, executive director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

Goehring, in ministry for 32 years and before her appointment to the conference office was District Superintendent in the Fayetteville District, knows a thing or two about churches. Large ones, small ones, churches with a fire in their belly, churches that haven't taken a dare or experimented with something new since grandmother was the lay leader, and even congregations that don't want anyone to rattle their cages, just to leave them alone.

Like other mainline denominations, North Carolina United Methodists have concerns about what they see happening across the denomination. Declining membership, sluggish growth (if any) and congregations that have lost their lust for life, their focus and their self-confidence.

Believing that big doesn't mean better, the trained coaches from the conference office – there will be a couple of dozen of them by the end of Conference next June – are ready to help local churches get back in the game.

The decision to begin "coaching" instead of "telling" began last January when the conference

See "New approaches," page 5

*Wanted:
Churches
in search of
a vision*

*Coaching Feature -
Pages 1, 4-5*



Several churches in the North Carolina Annual Conference have recently worked with a coach to develop a vision plan. Read the stories of Bethany UMC and Bath UMC on page 4.

Bishop Marion Edwards, mission leader, dies

By Linda Bloom *

Retired United Methodist Bishop Marion Edwards, 71, who led the denomination's North Carolina Conference for eight years, died Jan. 24 at Columbus (Ga.) Hospice House after a battle with cancer.

He was remembered as an ardent supporter of mission work by those who knew him.

"Bishop Edwards brought a passion for mission, and he led the denomination's campaign for the establishment of a seminary in Russia," said Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn Jr.,

current leader of the North Carolina Conference.

"In addition, he will be remembered for providing care for thousands left homeless after a devastating hurricane and subsequent flooding right here in eastern North Carolina soon after his arrival."

"He never met a mission he didn't like," said the Rev. Belton Joyner of Bahama, a longtime friend and former assistant to Edwards. "He had a great energy for mission. The conference disaster response center was named after him."

Memorial services were held on

Jan. 29 at St. Luke United Methodist Church in downtown Columbus, where he served as senior pastor from 1988-96. He was elected to the episcopacy in 1996 and led the North Carolina Conference until his retirement in 2004.

Doing God's will

Edwards, who was diagnosed with cancer in the pancreas and lungs in August 2009, spoke with a reporter from the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer several months later about living

See "Bishop Edwards," page 2

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PERIODICALS

Bishop Edwards, mission leader, dies *from page 1*

with the illness and the "worldwide support" he had received.

"I pray for healing but I can only do that within the will of God," he said then. "I've told people, 'I'm not afraid to die' but of the process of dying, even though I know I've got a home in heaven."

Edwards was "a great bishop of the church," said Bishop Paul Leeland of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Leeland, who was Edwards' assistant before becoming a bishop himself, cited his friend's personal and pastoral influence as the episcopal leader of North Carolina. "He had a tremendous sensitivity for the pastoral oversight of his conference, both for lay and clergy."

Edwards endeared himself to many people during his eight years in the conference, Gwinn said, and he is remembered for his humor and compassion.

Strong interest in mission

A native of Springfield, Ga., Edwards was a graduate of Georgia Southern University and Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where he earned both a master's degree in divinity and a doctorate. He was an ordained elder in the South Georgia Conference. As a pastor, Edwards served Georgia congregations of all sizes and in a variety of locations and was district superintendent of the Waycross District. At St. Luke's, he encouraged the congregation to devote half of its financial resources to spiritual nurturing and evangelism and half to local and global mission work.

His interest in mission outreach

also was shaped by his two terms as a director of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, from 1988 to 1996, and his roles as honorary chair and as executive coordinator for the Capital Campaign for the Russia United Methodist Seminary.

The bishop's leadership of the North Carolina Conference's involvement in hurricane and flood disaster relief led the conference to name its disaster warehouse - Marion Edwards Recovery Center Inc., or MERCI - in his honor. Edwards also was recognized for his leadership in 2002, when North Carolina Gov. Michael Easley presented him with the state's highest honor, "The Order of the Long Leaf Pine."

"I think the breadth of his ministry expressed itself with the equal balance of social concern, evangelism, concern for individuals, concern for the church as a community, concern for the connection - all that, kept in a wonderful balance, made his ministry very effective among us," Joyner said.

Edwards was a trustee of seven colleges and universities and was a member of the Board of Visitors at Duke Divinity School, the denomina-

tion's Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the University Senate.

He is survived by Linda Layfield Edwards, whom he married on June 9, 1962, and their children and grandchildren: MaLinda Edwards and her son Taylor; Will Edwards and son William in Hamilton, Ga.; and Wesley Edwards in Hamilton, Ga.

**Linda Bloom is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service. Kathy L. Gilbert, a multimedia reporter for the young adult content team at UM Communications, contributed to this story.*



Bishop Marion Edwards

Memorial gifts

Three options are suggested for memorial gifts:

- ♦ St. Luke UMC, 1104 Second Ave., Columbus, Ga 31901
- ♦ MERCI Center (disaster recovery), make gifts to MERCI Center - NC Conference Advance #S00136 and mail to NC Conference/Raleigh Area, PO Box 60053, Charlotte NC 28260-0053. (With Advance number, check can be placed in any UMC offering plate.)
- ♦ Russia United Methodist Seminary, put Advance # 12174A on check memo line and place it in a UMC offering plate or search on Google for "Advance - Moscow Seminary," click on the Advance link and select "How to Give" at the top of the Advance for Christ web page.

High school students invited to apply for the Shelton Leadership Challenge at NCWC

By Susan Best *

NC Wesleyan College is now taking applications from rising 9th through 12th grade high school students who want to participate in the Shelton

Leadership Challenge at NC Wesleyan College.

The program will be held for the first time at NCWC on July 10-15 and is limited to 50 students.

In this six-day residential experience, students take part in activities including public speaking, personal assessment and group dynamics, the role of values and ethics, approaches to leadership, team building and empowering others, civic and social responsibility and goal setting.

Applications are due by Friday, May 20 and may be downloaded online at <http://www.gatewaytechnologycenter.org> or picked up at the Gateway Technology Center on the NC Wesleyan College campus.

"We are thrilled to bring the Shelton Leadership Challenge to North Carolina Wesleyan," said John Thompson, director of the Wesleyan Leadership Institute and vice president of athletics. "We look forward to meeting and working with many out-

standing high school students during the summer of 2011."

The leadership program is offered through the East Carolina University/NC State University Collaborative at the Gateway Technology Center as an extension of the General H. Hugh Shelton Leadership Center.

General Shelton established the center at NC State to train students in some of the leadership skills that led to his success.

He grew up in Edgecombe County, earned his U.S. Army commission through ROTC training while a student at NC State, and rose through the ranks to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, now retired.

The cost to attend is \$450, which includes materials, lodging and food, ropes training, transportation during the week and night activities. The application includes a form for a limited number of need-based scholarships. Students who apply for the program must have a 2.8 grade point average or better.

For questions, email marilynn_anselmi@ncsu.edu or sara_hughes@ncsu.edu or call 252-446-2585.

** Susan Best is director of Communications at NC Wesleyan College.*

Methodist Home for Children

Sunday

We invite your congregation to support Methodist Home for Children on February 13, 2011.

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Upcoming Events in the NC Conference

Melton to discuss churches, employment practices, and federal law on Feb. 17

The Rev. Joy Melton, J.D., chief resource officer for The United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust, will provide an overview of federal laws that apply to employment procedures at a presentation being held at the United Methodist Building in Garner, Feb. 17, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. In addition, she will give practical advice for how churches fit into federal requirements and how churches can protect themselves with adequate employment practices and procedures. The course will cover the basic application of the Civil Rights Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, and several other federal regulations with which church leaders should be familiar. The registration fee for the event is \$10 per person to cover the cost of lunch and workshop materials. Seats are limited so please e-mail kbell@nccumc.org to reserve a seat.

"Musical Methodism" concert on March 5 benefits Central Conference Pension Initiative

Approximately 2,000 retired pastors, lay workers and surviving spouses in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe are struggling to survive.

In areas where living conditions are already difficult, these faithful workers for Christ face economic insecurity when their career in ministry ends with little or no retirement income.

Saint Francis UMC in Cary is an example of how a church is responding to the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI)—a connectional challenge to support those who serve the central conferences.

Organist Scott Baker and guest ensembles will perform a concert of works composed by members of the founding family of Methodism. Charles, Samuel, and Samuel Sebas-

tian Wesley were among the most accomplished and acclaimed English composers of their generations. The concert will feature rarely heard masterpieces for organ, choir and string quartet.

Musical Methodism: The Concert Works of the Wesleys will be presented at Saint Francis UMC in Cary (2965 Kildaire Farm Road) at 5 p.m. on March 5.

More information on the Central Conference Pension Initiative is available at <http://www.ccpi-umc.org/>. Details on the NC Conference participation is available at [http://nccumc.org/treasurer/downloads/under Central Conference Pension Initiative](http://nccumc.org/treasurer/downloads/under%20Central%20Conference%20Pension%20Initiative). For information about Saint Francis UMC, visit www.saint-franciscumc.org.

Holistic Stewardship workshop on April 5, features Ginghamburg's Mike Slaughter

In partnership between the Conference's Stewardship Committee and the Academy for Leadership Excellence, a workshop called "Holistic Stewardship: Reinigorating your Church's Efforts to Serve" is being offered on Tuesday, April 5.

Led by Mike Slaughter, lead pastor of Ginghamburg UMC, Ohio, the workshop is being hosted by Garner UMC, 201 Methodist Drive, Garner from 10am-3pm. Cost of the event is \$25 and includes lunch.

View stewardship as a means to celebrate God and find servants (volunteers) in the church. Join transformational leader Mike Slaughter as he speaks about ways to encourage a congregation's efforts. Slaughter's inspirational sessions will focus in two areas: church growth and church finances.

True church growth is not about how many people are attending. The

true greatness of any local church is measured by how many people are serving the marginalized.

The business of the church is to engage and empower disciples of Jesus in meeting the needs and closing the gaps of disparities for the least of these.

Rather than worrying about numbers in the pews, begin to be the hands and feet of Jesus in homes, communities and to the outermost places in the world.

Pastors and church leaders don't go into ministry to fundraise, yet all effective ministry requires money.

The workshop will cover common "money myths" that people don't want to talk about money and people don't want to give and discuss a comprehensive 12-month stewardship program that connects people to the felt need and the mission, rather than the church budget.



Alan Hirsch

Alan & Debra Hirsch to lead "ReJesus" workshop March 1

Internationally renowned and innovative church leaders, Alan and Debra Hirsch, will lead the 2011 NC Conference Elders' Day Apart on Tuesday, March 1, in Raleigh at Edenton Street UMC.

This partnering of the Elders Day Apart and Academy National Leadership series is open to both clergy and laity, but will also include a special time just for the clergy with the Hirschs.

The Hirschs will lead the topic, "ReJesus: A Practical Guide for Leading a Missional Church," providing a practical, nuts-and-bolts leadership guide of how to bring about this radical missional paradigm shift.

The day begins at 9 a.m. with a gathering time and continental breakfast. The opening session begins at 9:30 a.m. Lunch is included and the final session ends at 3:30 p.m. All participants need to register through the Academy for Leadership Excellence to help facilitate the preparation of participant study packets and a meal count. Participants can register and pay online at the Academy website (www.theafle.org).

Since the event is being partially underwritten financially by the Conference, the cost for Elders is \$25 and \$75 for all other participants.

Continuing Education credits through Methodist University are available

See "Hirsch to lead," page 5

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The impact of coaching: stories from two churches

By Flo Johnston *

When the Rev. Jimmy Weaver arrived in Durham two years ago as the new preacher at Bethany UMC on Guess Road, he inherited a congregation that was dealing with a very strategic issue in its life: To move or not to move. That was the question.

An inner-city congregation, the church was entertaining the idea of moving from Guess Road to a suburban location, but a search committee had not located a suitable site.

That may have been providential, however, because after the church and the pastor had coaching from Peg Aldridge of Passion in Partnership, the congregation made a sea change in its thinking.

With the help of their coach, the congregation began to see how the location of the church coupled with the talents of its membership could play into an ongoing ministry in the city. The church decided to stay in its present location and to buy an adjoining 2.5 acres and convert the building on the new property into additional worship and fellowship space.

"We needed additional space and more access to the present church property," Weaver said. "This would allow us to begin new ministries and to expand some ministries with a larger kitchen and fellowship space. "Hospitality and food ministry is a large part of this church's DNA," he said.

The church is already known for its barbecues and fellowship dinners and for its practice of what Methodists call "radical hospitality, meeting and greeting."

"We are now thinking that our place is right here on Guess Road," Weaver said. "With the added space, we have a vision of becoming a spiritual oasis in the city. We are talking about a place for gardens and walking trails on our church grounds."

But congregational coaching was not the only benefit Weaver gained in the coaching process. He was part of a pilot project to explore coaching for clergy when they face new appointments.

He worked with Aldridge before making the move from Snow Hill to Durham. They talked through such questions as how to assess where the church was and how to broach the transition.

"Moving is a highly stressful situation," he said. "It was helpful to have an emotional support system in a time in our system that is very stressful. It was helpful in confirming my own strengths and to articulate that more clearly, helpful in strategizing how I might personally want to live my life or be about my work."

The Rev. Kelli Sorg's first appointment two years ago was to Bath UMC, a rural church with Sunday attendance of about 50.

"One of the problems the rural church faces is the tendency to feel isolated," she said. "Coaching helped this congregation realize that it is part of a larger connection. Bath is a small church and this has pluses and minuses. The benefit is in knowing each other well and the family-type atmosphere. But small churches are not able to offer as



Leaders at Bath UMC discuss individual strengths that can be used in developing a congregational vision. Clockwise from left - Brenda Lewis, Vera Hollowell, the Rev. Kelli Sorg, Jerome Hollowell, Ron Parrish, Dean Sorg. (Photos by Bill Norton)

much ministry as larger churches."

Churches, like individuals, she said, tend to get stuck in a rut, but coaching helped this church discover where they were and to dream about new and different things the church might do.

"Out of the conversation came something different," she said. "The four steps in the process were discover, dream, design, destiny."

That something different was a gospel music concert involving all area churches and held at a local amphitheater. About 300 people attended, she said, including bikers on their Harleys.

"We were able to reach out to people who would never come into a church building. What grew out of coaching was the recognition that we were blessed to live in Bath on the river. This past summer, we hosted Dockside Devotions and joined with the Christian and Episcopal churches to do five or 10-minute devotionals, including singing and praying in a local park on the Pamlico River. It made me think of John Wesley going out to preach," she said.

The impact of coaching has also shown up in the way the church feels about itself, the pastor said. The atmosphere has changed.

"There is no more feeling helpless, older and small. Before coaching, none of this was possible. The pastor was the one to have the vision, but we are now in partnership between

pastor and congregation," she said. "I grew up in that kind of church and it is exciting for me to be a different kind of pastor and help others make that change."

The ministry is a second career for Sorg, 46. Her first career was in public relations and public television where she won an Emmy Award for her work at Kentucky Educational Television.

"But the Lord had other plans for me," she said. "I was raised a Baptist and was told that God did not call women into the ministry. But my Southern Baptist grandmother has supported me every step of the way. My grandfather still struggles with it, but they both believe in my call."

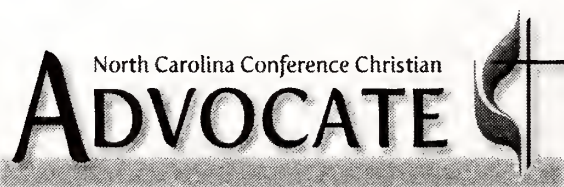
"Coaching gets tossed around a lot," Sorg said, "it can mean anything from teaching to counseling or therapy, but the coaching we are doing in the conference has an outcome that is lifelong, fruitful ministry, not just for me or one congregation but for all of us."

"What is so wonderful is when a question comes up, the people in the church stop and think about discerning what God is calling us to do."

* Flo Johnston is a Durham-based religion writer who has a weekly column called "Faith in Focus" in *The Durham News* and *The Chapel Hill News*, community newspapers of *The News & Observer*. She can be reached at fjohnston3@nc.rr.com or 919-489-7251.

Feedback after a coaching session:

I have to admit I wasn't excited about...a 'visioning process' but have enjoyed every minute of your sharing with us. Thank you so much for your affirmation of our church and its ministries.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

New approaches to old challenges *continued from page 1*

office underwent re-organization, Goehring said.

"Coaching is a fairly new way of engaging people in conversation about their strengths, dreams, visions and hopes for being a more effective and vital congregation," she said. "We needed something different. There are too many declining and closing churches."

Coaching at its lowest common denominator is helping a congregation drive a stake in the ground and then live into it. This means discerning a new vision and staying focused. It means building on strengths of the particular congregation, its members, their gifts and talents, and developing confidence in God and in themselves to be the church, according to Goehring.

"What we can offer is a long-term relationship with a congregation that will help them stay focused and in the process we can offer demographic resources, assessment tools, even secret worshippers," she said.

At the same time the Conference office was re-organizing, Beth Hood, District Superintendent in the Greenville District, had already hooked up with Peg Aldridge, a United Methodist layperson in Charlotte, who left a career in financial services on Wall Street to start a ministry in which she applied the coaching paradigm, a common process in the business world, to the church.

"God stopped me in my tracks and has opened so many doors," Aldridge said about her career move.

After earning a graduate degree in innovation and coaching at Queens University, she began her ministry called "Passion in Partnership" and now does work in three United Methodist conferences, Western NC, Alabama and the NC Conference.

Coaching assistance begins with an e-mail

Need a coach? Churches and pastors can begin the process by sending an e-mail to coaching@nccumc.org. Coaching is not something that is accomplished in one visit. It is not someone telling a church how to solve a problem. Coaching is a commitment with a specially-trained person working with a group or clergy leader to see what ministries God has placed before the church. Then the coach works with the church to see how to best address these ministries. The coach may work with a church or pastor for a year or more. Three members of the Conference Connectional Ministries staff and other coaches are currently working with over 30 pastors and churches. As more coaches are trained there will be further opportunities of assistance.

Hood said that Aldridge has worked with several churches in the Greenville District.

"When I came as district superintendent, what struck me was the sense of isolation felt in the churches. Some felt like they were all by themselves trying to do ministry. They acknowledged that we were in a connectional church, but they had not

lived into that fully," she said.

Coaching has helped churches recognize that they are in ministry together with the larger church and this recognition has helped them thrive in a way they could not do alone. It has involved sharing resources, doing ministry together and having some thinking partners, she said.

"Coaching has not been done long enough [in the N.C. Conference] to point to measurable results," Goehring said. "However, we do have anecdotal results, where pastors and lay leaders describe the support they have received through coaching and a renewed sense of purpose."

"Every conference emphasizes different things. Ours is focused on congregational health."

Coaching partnerships is coming at a significant time in the life of The United Methodist Church. In October, the Council of Bishops released a report "The Call to Action" that describes the urgent need for revitalized congregations and greater impact in the community through the ministries of the church.

"A lot of congregations are defensive," Goehring said. "But the approach of the coaching process is not to go into a church and tell them how to run a specific program or solve a particular problem, but to help them to see what God is calling the church to be, what its ministry possibilities are."



RIGHT: Through insights gained in a coaching program, Bethany UMC plans to renovate an old veterinary clinic on property they purchased to create a large multi-purpose space which will become the home for expanding ministry at the church. Looking at the renovation plans are (L-R) Gary Crispell, chair church site search committee; Dan Portaro, co-chair long range planning committee and chair of the Capital Campaign Committee; Connie Kirby, co-chair long range planning committee; and James Sprague, trustee chair. (Photos by Bill Norton)

* Flo Johnston is a Durham-based religion writer who has a weekly column called "Faith in Focus" in *The Durham News* and *The Chapel Hill News*, community newspapers of *The News & Observer*. She can be reached at fjohnston3@nc.rr.com or 919-489-7251.



Peg Aldridge, second from right, adds to the discussion during a Coaching Training held at Camp Rockfish. This the second intensive coaching class with a focus on working with congregations and groups. Each session begins with worship and includes opportunities for participants to practice skills. Also shown (L-R) are Carol Goehring, Tim Newman, and Steve Taylor. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Hirsch to lead *continued from page 3*

for an additional \$15.

Co-author of best sellers, "ReJesus" and "The Shaping of Things to Come," Alan Hirsch has also written "The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church" and most recently co-authored with Debra, "Untamed." All books address the critical need for a "ReJesusing" of the church, so that ministry is always seen through the eyes of Jesus.

If this is done, then ministry will be transformed by a radical paradigm shift. The traditional attractional style, which assumes that "if we build it they will come," will be replaced by a missional mode, which moves the ministries of God's people into the hub of life; that puts Christians and not-yet-Christians shoulder-to-shoulder in lengthy partnerships; which thinks of ministries not in terms of strategies and budgets but in terms of people and places.

In short, the driving force behind this innovative approach to ministry is to "ReJesus" the church.

Too many Christians, Hirsch writes, "hang out" only with other Christians and in environments frequented by other Christians. If Christians are to follow Jesus, intentional choices are needed to move out of comfort zones and be where people are. Christ-likeness cannot be demonstrated at a distance from those being served.

Celebrate Camp Sunday, help to transform lives

By Rhonda Parker *

Every day, United Methodist Camps in the North Carolina Conference—Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish—are transforming lives with the love of God.

At camp, people of all ages discover new friends, accomplish new goals, grow in Christ, and experience the wonder that nature offers.

Unplugged from the constant buzz of computers, television, video games, and cell phones, people find themselves making genuine connections with others, rediscovering the fun in physical activity, learning their own strengths, discovering God's grace, and finding their own voice.

"My daughter grew by leaps and bounds in one week. She learned that she could tack and ride horses, meet new friends, and be okay without Mom and Dad for a few days," wrote the mother of a first time camper.

Another parent affirmed, "We will make every effort to send [our boys] every week next year. They came home happy, laughing, tired, and dirty—just the way little boys should spend the summer! Keep up the awesome job!!"

There are people in every congregation whose lives have been transformed by camping ministries. Camp Sunday provides an important opportunity to share this story.

Join with hundreds of churches across the Conference on or near Feb. 27 and celebrate Camp Sunday.

The NC Conference has three camps offering opportunities to reconnect outdoors. Each camp has the common resources of a beautiful outdoor setting, cabins, gathering spaces, campfires, and excellent food, yet each has its own distinct focus.

Each camp provides amazing summer camps for children and youth, and operates year-round with special programs for families, seniors, youth groups, school groups, church groups and retreat participants.

♦ At Camp Chestnut Ridge (www.campchestnutridge.org) near Efland, horseback riding, community gardening and ecological stewardship bring depth to the natural experience.

♦ At Camp Don Lee (www.donleecenter.org) in Arapahoe,

sailing and marine science are central to the camp's offerings.

♦ At Camp Rockfish (www.camprockfish.org) near Fayetteville, guests can experience high adventure or enjoy the more refined retreat experience of the Bergland Retreat Center.

Camp Sunday can be celebrated by asking a child, youth or an adult who has been to camp to share their experiences. In addition, bulletin inserts and a camp litany are available for download at www.ncumcamps.org/

camp-sunday.

Congregations are also invited to help raise awareness of the Myra Morris Campership Fund, created to honor Morris' dedication to camping ministry. Donations to the Fund provide financial assistance to families who could not otherwise afford to send their children to camp. Last year, over 200 families were assisted by these funds.

To make a gift to the Campership Fund or to request materials, or to arrange for a speaker for Camp Sunday, please contact Dail Ballard at dail@ncumcamps.org or 910-352-8081.

* The Rev. Rhonda Parker works with the NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries.



High ropes adventures await campers ready to take a leap of faith! Backpacking, servant leadership development, and leave no trace skills are all part of the outdoor adventures offered for middle and high schoolers.

Forms now online for General/Jurisdictional delegate nominees

Delegate nomination forms for clergy and laypersons for the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences are on the conference website nccumc.org under Resources and then Conference Resources.

Persons interested in placing their name in nomination should read requirements and information on the References site before beginning to complete the appropriate form. General Conference is April 24-May 4, 2012 in Tampa, FL and Jurisdictional Conference is July 16-21, 2012 at Lake Junaluska.

Nine clergy and nine laypersons will be elected as General Conference delegates. An additional nine clergy and nine layperson elected will join them as the Jurisdictional Conference delegation. An additional five clergy and five laypersons are expected to be elected as alternates.

Clergy persons are reminded that only deacons and elders in Full Connection are eligible to be nominated as clergy nominees. Laity who have been a UMC local church member in the conference for two years and active in the UMC for four years are eligible for nomination.

Nomination forms are limited to one 8 1/2 x 11" sheet, one side only. Contact the Conference Secretary's office at 800-849-4433, ext. 222 for questions.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE BY OWNER: 3,400 Square Foot Two Story, Brick Lake Front Home at Lake Junaluska Assembly. Four bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, 2 great rooms and fireplaces, new hardwood floors, 2 kitchens one recently installed. Use as 2 separate units or one large home. To view upstairs and exterior go to www.maggiervacations.com and click on Pops Porch. Contact Sherrill Sykes at hmsykes@atmc.net.

OCEAN FRONT CONDO for rent at Villa Dunescape, Atlantic Beach, NC. Top floor with skylight, elevator access, 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 4TVs, WiFi connection, screened porch overlooks pool and

ocean. Off-season rates available. Contact Sally Dillon by e-mail jesbdillon@yahoo.com or by phone (919) 931-3295 (Raleigh, NC).

LAKE JUNALUSKA lakeview eff. apt. No steps! Sleeps 4, full kit. \$40 nite/\$250 wk. NP/NS. Call 828-456-5183.

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska - 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom townhouse, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs!

Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccumc.org.

EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.

FACT Specialized Services becomes MHC program

Methodist Home for Children (MHC) has merged with FACT Specialized Services, a Jacksonville-based mental health agency, in a partnership that will enhance services to children and families throughout North Carolina.

FACT was founded in 2001 to provide mental health treatment for children and adolescents who are dually diagnosed with mental illness/severe emotional disorders and an underlying developmental disability. On Jan. 1, FACT officially became a program of MHC.

A successful for-profit company with an experienced and dedicated staff, FACT serves children and adolescents, ages 8 to 21, with day treatment and round-the-clock residential Level 3 treatment services.

"The FACT merger will reposition Methodist Home for Children among health and human services providers by strategically expanding its capacity to serve children with specialized residential and day treatment programs," said Bruce Stanley, president / CEO of MHC.

MHC was founded in 1899 to care for children in desperate circumstances and, as those circumstances have changed, the ministry has evolved to address them with effective community-based services. Today, it serves nearly 1,500 children and family members statewide.

"Methodist Home for Children is devoted to serving children, but especially those on the margins—children who have run out of options," Stanley says. "The need among children who are dually diagnosed is great, and this work calls for highly effective and specialized services. Methodist Home for Children and FACT share a singular commitment to doing whatever is necessary for the well-being of each child."

FACT operates day treatment in Onslow and Carteret counties and two Level Three residential centers for youth who need out-of-home care but do not meet the criteria for inpatient psychiatric services.

"It provides the only community-based service designed specifically for this population of dually diagnosed children in North Carolina," said Becky Fields, FACT co-founder and psychologist.

Roughly half of its residential clients come from the Wake County area, with the remainder arriving from other eastern and central NC counties.

"Our commitment since we started FACT has been to provide an outstanding service to these kids because no one else is doing it," Fields said. "Because of changes in the



Staff and clients of FACT Specialized Services' Day Treatment Program are shown preparing a bed for planting. FACT clients in day treatment participate in a horticulture program, growing vegetables and flowers.

industry and need for economies of scale, we have been in various stages of merger talks with nine organizations over the past 18 months. We decided to join with Methodist Home for Children because it shares that commitment to care for children and adolescents in need, no matter what. There was a comfort level with the leadership team and our shared mission from the beginning."

FACT will continue to serve its existing client base with an expanded continuum of care.

Through the merger, it will have access to MHC's established after-care services for children as they leave the program.

In October, FACT was state certified as a Critical Access Behavioral Health Agency (CABHA), a new state requirement for receiving referrals

for clients who need mental health services. FACT was among 161 of 601 applicants to complete the certification process.

This CABHA certification will allow the newly merged agency to offer outpatient therapy, diagnostic evaluations and psychiatric services as an ongoing addition to its continuum of care. The merger will add 35 FACT staff to MHC's 185 employees.

Academy launches leadership fellows program

The new Leadership Fellows Program was launched by the Academy For Leadership Excellence during a dinner at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh in November. During the dinner, members of the 2011 Leadership Fellows class were honored.

Sue Nilson Kibbey (formerly executive pastor of Ginghamburg United Methodist Church), director of Connectional Ministries of the Western Ohio UMC Conference, was the guest speaker. In addition to the Leadership Fellows, members of the Academy Board, faculty, and staff were also present.

The Leadership Fellows program is a two-year intensive leadership development experience, limited

annually to a maximum of 15 selected clergy and their lay partners.

These clergy and laity meet monthly as a community of leaders to study core leadership competencies as well as the fundamentals of church leadership. While studying with a faculty drawn from universities, businesses, and the church, each Fellow is assigned a pastoral and congregational coach.

Focus of the first year is on enhancing practical leadership skill sets such as fundamentals of leadership, self-awareness, personal value and visioning, balance and self-discipline, strategic thinking, and vision-casting.

The second-year module covers church leadership skill sets which

include handling conflict, building strong lay ministry teams, finances and stewardship, growing small group ministries, and being a missional congregation within the local community and wider world.

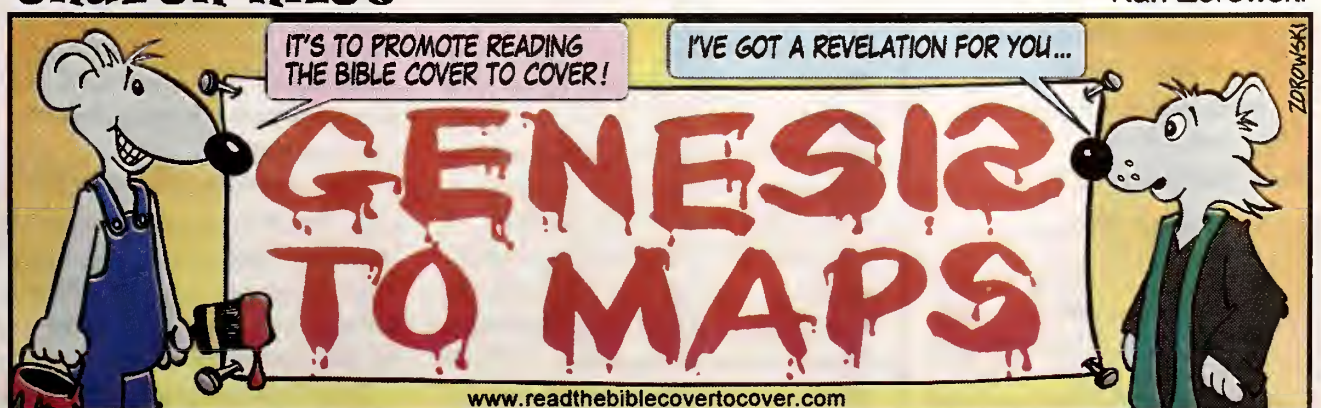
Although each Fellow pays an annual tuition of \$500, the cost of the program is underwritten by donations. The Academy receives no Annual Conference financial support.

The members of the 2011 Leadership Fellows class have been nominated by the Bishop and Cabinet and the Academy Admissions Team.

More information about the Fellows Program and Academy can be found on the Academy website at www.theafle.org.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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CYBERCHURCHES:

USING TECHNOLOGY TO SHARE GOOD NEWS

By Liz Applegate *

Sending text messages during worship? Watching a sermon on an iPad? Using Facebook to help a church event go "viral"? How about paying a tithe through a wireless kiosk?

These are no longer glimpses into the future or practices found in trendy emergent churches, or heaven forbid, simply disrespectful church behavior. They are becoming accepted practices on any given Sunday in United Methodist churches across the country.

For new church start Grace Adventure UMC in upper state New York, social media has been a way to reach the community. The church has a Facebook page, and local pastor Annette Snedaker uses her own Facebook profile to help members and visitors get to know her.

When Grace Adventure invited people to a gathering for free bubble tea (a beverage that combines fruit syrup, black tea and tapioca pearls), the church's launch team hoped to draw 30 people to help celebrate the church's first anniversary.

Then the invitation went "viral" on Facebook. "The way Facebook works, if you say you are going to [attend] an event, your friends can see you are going. That is how we ended up with 365 people [attending]," said Snedaker. "We now have people involved in the church that came."

As a "church without walls" and no church building, Grace Adventure meets in public places such as restaurants and coffee shops, where the community is already present. Facebook gives them the same presence

with an online community.

Social media should be viewed as a conversation, says Phil Cooke, author of several books including "Branding Faith: Why Some Churches and Non-profits Impact Culture and Others Don't" (Regal). He advises pastors to go beyond sharing sermons on a social media platform and become more transparent in sharing what it's like to be a pastor.

"People want to know you," said Cooke, whose father was a pastor in Oklahoma. "They want to hear what you are wrestling with, what God is showing you—that's why they are following you on social media."

Some churches are bringing social media into the sanctuary. First UMC in Rowlett, Texas, recently used a free technology called Wiffiti during a sermon titled "Get the Message?" Instead of asking the congregation to turn off their cell phones, worshippers were asked to text in God's personal message for them. The messages were broadcast on screens and became part of the sermon.

"I was a little nervous about it," admits senior pastor, the Rev. Jan Davis. "But it really enhanced worship and fit in with what we were trying to say." Senior associate pastor, the Rev. Wes Magruder, is incorporating it into First Rowlett's contemporary service. "I learned that sermons are a dialogue between the preacher and the congregation. This is taking that concept to a new level," said Magruder.

Pastors have to show some flexibility with new technology, he added. "You have to be willing to answer those questions that are not planned for and go off-script."

Online worship

Impact, a United Methodist Church in Atlanta, advertises that it is "doing church differently."

"Since we first started, technology has been important to us," said the Rev. Olu Brown, founding pastor and co-author of "Zero to 80: Innovative Ideas for Planting and Accelerating Church Growth" (Impact Press). The church recently launched online applications that allow viewers to watch live streaming worship services on smart phones and other mobile devices.

Reaching the community through online technology has also been an intentional goal for United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, a 17,000 membership megachurch in Leawood, Kan. Resurrection Online was devel-



In addition to building community through online social networks such as Facebook, some churches exploring the cyber-frontier have applications to allow viewers to watch live streaming worship services on smart phones and other mobile devices, offer video resumes of the pastors on YouTube, and accept offerings through a wireless kiosk.

oped in 2008 as a first step in making connections with non-religious and nominally religious people and draws more than 1,300 visitors each week.

The website (www.rezonline.org) includes links for attendance, online giving, online Bible study and small group interaction through chat and video sessions. It also includes ways participants can serve the online community by becoming a moderator, tech administrator or prayer partner.

"We have found we can connect with those who do not have a church or who have had a bad experience with the church in their past, and use it as a tool to get them connected in the Christian community," said the Rev. Andrew Conard, pastor of Resurrection Online.

Not everyone agrees, however, that spiritual community can take place in cyberspace. The Rev. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan leadership with the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), says having online worship is an "oxymoron."

"Worship is the body of Christ assembling together—offering themselves to God in service," he said. "You can't do that with people spread out, sitting in their own living rooms in front of a computer screen."

Since sacraments such as Communion cannot and should not be administered online, he added, online worship distorts the very character of Christian worship.

"You need to be present, touch and hear the people around you," said Manskar. "That's how God came to us in Christ—as a present, embodied human—and that's what is essential for Christian worship."

Conard acknowledges concern over administering Communion through

Resurrection Online, and says the church is considering possibilities, including the formation of a micro-church of Resurrection. Residents at an independent living facility gather each week to watch the streaming online sermons together, which would allow for a local pastor to be present for sacraments.

Beyond convenience

Cooke finds some are hesitant to embrace technology due to the fear of losing older congregation members and fear of change. "The Bible said, 'The word of God never changes' and that's what ministry leaders want to focus on. But everything else does: Culture changes, people change, times change, technology changes. And if we don't understand that, we are going to totally get lost in the shuffle out there."

And while some United Methodist churches may see technology as a quick fix to stem denominational decline, it still takes planning to use it well, says Dr. Jack Ewing, executive director of the Foundation for Evangelism, an affiliate of GBOD. "It's like everything else in the church," he said. "Even if it's a good idea, if there is not enough structure or direction or forethought behind it, it won't be successful."

Ewing believes that technology should be viewed as a tool that can help invite others into the church by creating a welcoming environment.

"Projecting songs on screens is a perfect example," he said. "Ten to 15 years ago it would have been unusual to see. Now...50 percent of churches have some sort of worship

See "Cyberchurches," page 10

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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Children's Ministry Forum-Feb. 22-24

Children's Ministry leaders in large United Methodist churches will receive new skills, fresh understandings and revived energy at the 2011 Children's Ministry Forum on Feb. 22-24 in San Antonio, TX. "Remembering Our Story," will focus on remembering, rejoicing, renewing and responding as participants experience the Biblical stories in new ways and develop ways to teach the stories to children. Registration fee is \$275 and includes dinner on Tuesday and lunch on Wednesday and Thursday. One-day commuter registration is \$125 each day. Fees for each pre-conference seminar range from \$35 to \$75. Registration is limited, and the deadline is Feb. 18 for the forum and Feb. 1 for a special hotel rate. For information, visit www.gbod.org/cmfb, or contact: Connie Schmutz by e-mail at cschmutz@gbod.org or by phone at (877) 899-2780, ext. 1761.

Native American Retreat-Feb. 24-26

The 10th Annual Native American Leadership Retreat will be Feb. 24-26 at Lake Junaluska. Experience spiritual growth and nurture in a cultural context through challenging preaching and seminars, worship and fellowship. This year's theme is "Trail of Hope: Removal to Restoration." Details online at <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/native-american-retreat/>.

Worship & Song Event - March 1-3

A national event to introduce Worship & Song, a new collection of song and worship resources developed by The General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House has been announced for March 1-3 in Nashville, TN. The Worship & Song print and digital resources are scheduled for release in February 2011. The event will include worship, singing, and learning, and features workshops with Carlton Young, Marcia McFee, Mark Miller, and many others. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/bsb5FD>.

Caring for Creation - Mar. 31-Apr. 3

Life in the world today is challenged by how to care for the gift of Earth given to all by God. The Christian faith challenges all to be caretakers of Earth. Caring for Creation helps members of faith communities learn how to take care of the Earth that is often taken for granted. The Caring for Creation experience provides the Biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of the home, Earth. Early registration is due by March 1. For details, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation/.

One Great Hour of Sharing - April 3

One Great Hour of Sharing is just a few months away. Order free resources and start planning for the April 3 offering. This annual offering underwrites UMCOR's "costs of doing business." UMCOR receives no World Service funds or any other apportionments. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing help to "keep the lights on" and cover UMCOR's costs of doing business, laying the foundation for UMCOR to seek justice and mercy for suffering people everywhere. The agency's top ratings by Charity Navigator and the American Institute of Philanthropy attest to UMCOR's financial accountability. One Great Hour of Sharing resources for churches are available online at <http://new.gbpm-umc.org/umcor/give/oghs/> or can be ordered by phone at 888-346-3862. Items available include offering envelopes, posters, a children's sermon and liturgical resources.

Change the World - May 14-15

Churches are encouraged to discern ways for participation in the second Change the World event planned for the weekend of May 14-15. This is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service - locally and globally. During the May weekend, United Methodist churches are encouraged to create and participate in a service or fundraising event that helps bring about positive change, whether it's cleaning up school grounds,

renovating homes or getting involved in global health issues like malaria.

Churches can take advantage of existing ministries or initiate a new outreach event. For more information, visit the Change the World web page at UM Communications at umcom.org/changetheworld.

Cross-Racial/Cultural Appointments in the Global Church - May 16-18

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) has opened registration for "Facing the Future: Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments in a Global Church," May 16-18 at the Westin Los Angeles Airport Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif. The event features special learning tracks designed for Bishops and Cabinets, Boards of Ordained Ministries, clergy and laity, and will bring together experts at all levels of the cross-racial/cross-cultural appointment process to resource and train leaders impacting CR/CC appointments to be effective in their roles and create a community for connection and dialogue on issues relating to CR/CC appointments.

Participants will hear stories from those who have experienced the joy and pain of CR/CC appointments and who have wisdom to share. Early registration, \$250, ends Feb. 28. Regular registration, \$300, is open March 1-April 15. For information about event presenters, the schedule, pre-event activities, and lodging, visit www.gcorr.org/crccevent.

Rekindling the Flame - June 30-July 3

Experience Jesus Christ and grow in the Christian Faith at "Rekindling the Flame of American Methodism" June 30 - July 3 at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center. This family experience will focus on the theme of "Christ's Mission is Ours."

Adults, college students, youth and children are invited to join together for a weekend of inspiration, information and fellowship through great preaching, Bible study, inspiring singing, and a special volunteer project. For a brochure and more information about Rekindling the Flame at Lake Junaluska, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/rekindling-the-flame or call 828-454-6656.

conference CALENDAR

February

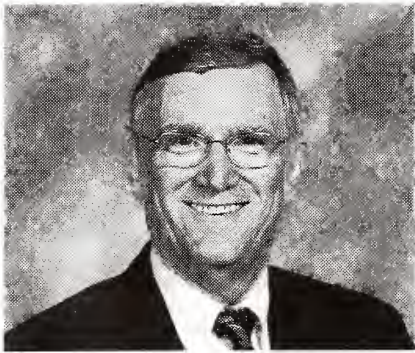
- 1 Conference Council on Finance and Administration Meeting
- 3-4 Advanced Academy of Christian Witness, Fort Caswell
- 4-5 NC Academy for Spiritual Formation Winter Soulstice Retreat w/ Phyllis Tickle
- 7 Conference Connectional Table Meeting
- 9 UM Foundation Board Meeting
- 13 Boy Scout Sunday Methodist Home for Children Sunday
- 14-18 Provisional interviews
- 15 Full Connection written work/DVDs
- 17 Employment Practices Liability Basics, 10 a.m., UMB

- 23 Conference Insurance Committee meeting
- 27 Camp Ministry Sunday

March

- 1 ReJesus and the Shape of Things to Come, Academy for Leadership Excellence
- Conference Council on Finance and Administration meeting 1 p.m., UMB
- 13 Girl Scout Sunday
- 14 Board of Pensions, 10 a.m.
- 15-19 Global Vision
- 18-20 Ebony Exploration retreat, Lake Junaluska
- 21 2011 Leadership Summit, Garner UMC
- 29 Conference Council on Finance and Administration meeting, 10 a.m. UMB

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

March 6, 2011

Text: 1 Timothy 2:1-6; 3:14-16
"Instructions About Worship"

Most Sundays find me on the third row from the back at Bethany UMC in Durham. It is a familiar place. Terry and Alan will be at the soundboard. The Hunt family will find their places on the last pew. Don and Gerry will be seated somewhere nearby and, if health is good, Kathryn and Janet will be there too.

I usually sign the attendance pad for Frances who sits at the end of the pew. Mr. Campbell has his spot on the aisle. We know we'll see Art and Doris. And first-time worshipers are often attracted to these seats near the back.

This is the context in which I share in the public worship of God. This amazing congregation is not afraid to sing a hymn it has never heard.

When the peace is passed, it usually will be a genuine "The peace of Christ be with you" rather than a hasty discussion of the weather or ball game. And don't get me started on the strengths that Sam, the long-time organist, brings to the music! (And, some Sundays, Pastor Jimmy plays saxophone as well as delivering a biblically based sermon!)

We name aloud prayer concerns ("Lord, in Your mercy") and all of us echo "Hear our prayer." And the hospitality seems to have the right balance of "You are indeed welcomed" and "You are free to be here at your own pace."

Making a Difference

The John A. Buckley Endowment Fund was established in September, 1999 to assist in ministries around the world where hope is needed. Through The Endowment grants have been given to the Mar Elias School in Galilee, ZOE ministry, ABRO, GBOM and scholarships have been given to clergy and laity enabling adults and youth to make spiritual pilgrimages around the world. Thank you for your continued support.

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March ^{adult} BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

I did not mean this to sound like an advertisement for Bethany! What I want to communicate is how important worship life is for the health of a community of faith and how valuable it is for spiritual growth to worship well. No wonder we are going to spend four Sundays studying worship. The questions become: "If we worship in this way, who is the God being worshiped and who are the people being formed?"

Paul uses these letters to Timothy as a way to instruct the young church. Instructions (verse 14)! The ways of worship can be taught. It is not just a matter of what I enjoy or what I have always done or what is the latest theological fad. It is a matter of dignity and godliness (verse 2). It is a matter of knowing how to behave as the church (verse 15). (Peterson translates that "how things ought to go.")

Paul reminds us that there is mystery in our tradition (3:16). On many of these matters, there is no simple "this is the way to do it" answer. But it is clear that the apostle expects the Church to "think on these things."

What Someone Else Has Said

In the introduction in *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (United Methodist Publishing House), one reads: "When the people of God gather, the Spirit is free to move them to worship in diverse ways..."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "We praise

Cyberchurches from page 8

service that uses projection." While appealing to a younger generation, projected hymns also help the elderly who have a hard time reading the font in a hymnal.

Cooke's message is stronger: Using newer technology is not just convenient, it's essential, "We live in this hyper-distracted world," Cooke said. "And in that world, who is going to win that battle of influence?"

"We are telling the greatest story ever told. If you take seriously reaching the world with the gospel, there is no question that anybody can have an impact now. Technology allows anybody to get that message heard."

* Liz Applegate is a staff writer with the *United Methodist Reporter*. Her article is reprinted with the permission of the *United Methodist Reporter* (www.umportal.org).

You, O Lord..."

March 13, 2011

Text: 1 Timothy 3:1-13
"Qualifications of Worship Leaders"

The church calendar has moved now into the season of Lent. It is a time in the flow of the spiritual journey that invites us to self-examination and repentance. It is a time to consider the ways we are accountable to God (and one another). It is a time to get specific as to how our commitment to Christ plays out.

The verses we study this week are tools for accomplishing these Lenten practices: self-examination, repentance, accountability, commitment.

In these opening portions of 1 Timothy 3, Paul spells out the qualifications that can be expected of those in leadership roles. The examples given are for those who have oversight responsibilities (*episkopos*—episcopal/bishop) and for those who have service ministries (*diakonos*—server/deacon).

Central to these qualifications is the emphasis of verse nine: "They must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." From that text, I get this image of someone's hanging on for dear life—"hold fast"—when all else seems to be slipping (or rushing) away. As a drowning person sometimes pushes off the one who has come to rescue (when simply hanging on is the secret), so we are tempted to fight off the mystery of faith. The word "mystery" in the New Testament language comes from roots that mean "shut the mouth—silence." Can we hang on to the faith when the answer is silence?

One way of paraphrasing this verse is: "Hang on for dear life when the faith is silent."

What about the "clear conscience" mentioned in verse nine? There is a German proverb that says "a good conscience is the best pillow." It is at the heart of a peaceful Christian life. Now there is an interesting juxtaposition: "hanging on for dear life while being at peace!"

The Santa Biblia (Spanish) translation of 1 Timothy 3:9 gives the word "limpia" to describe the conscience of the leader. Literally, that would translate as "cleaning" or "clean" conscience. Maybe Lent is a time to do a little scrubbing with the soap of Christ's presence.

What Someone Else Has Said

Richard Speight (*The Pancake Man and Friends*, Dimensions for Living)

writes, "It is that quote from Lillian Hellman's letter that inspires my... advice: 'I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashion.'... There are some things in life that simply do not change with the fashion of the year:...truth...honesty... integrity...self-respect. These things are eternal. They never change. They are always appropriate."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Help me look at my inward being, O Lord, and clear those things displeasing to You..."

March 20, 2011

Text: 1 Timothy 4:6-16
"Prepare for Leadership"

March Madness. How did the teams start preparing for the NCAA basketball tournament? When pre-season practice began, no team knew for sure if it would still be playing in late March.

The teams that now compete so passionately started getting ready for the possibilities of the tournament without knowing whom they would play, where they would play, who might be injured, who might be a disappointment for the season, who might be the unexpected star, which team might get upset along the way, etc., etc.!

Teams that still play for the NCAA championship had to prepare simply by being ready. Did preparation begin in October? Or maybe preparation began when players were being recruited. Maybe preparation began a few years ago when a high school phenom began honing skills for the game. Or ten years ago when a skinny child dribbled up the court at a recreation league game. Or twenty years ago when a proud parent put a basketball into the crib. Or when the doctor came out of the delivery room saying "Your baby is 25 inches long!"

Christian preparation works the same way. Each moment is a part of the preparation for the future that is yet unknown. Failure to continue to "work on one's game" will make a basketball player fall short of potential. Failure to continue to "grow in the faith" will make a Christian fall short of potential.

Paul advises Timothy: "Do not neglect the gift that is in you" (1 Timothy 4:14). That's another way of saying "Keep on getting ready to

See "Bible Study," page 11

March Adult Bible study *continued from page 10*

serve because you do not know when your gift will be needed." There are four words in the New Testament that get translated "gift": (1) an offering, (2) a tip or gratuity, (3) a present, and (4) divinely given faculty for doing something. It is this fourth meaning that Paul uses in his advice to Timothy.

How to prepare? Nourish on sound teaching (v. 6). Ignore spiritual wild goose chases (v. 7). Have spiritual disciplines (vv. 7-8). Work at it hard (v. 10). Make no excuses (v. 12). Practice Christian virtues (v. 12). Study the Word of God (v. 13). Respect the community's trust in you (v. 14). Is that enough to work on this week?

What Someone Else Has Said

In *Sanctity Without Starch* (Bristol Books), Robert Tuttle, Jr. has written: "All of the passages that relate to spiritual gifts have at least one thing in common—the gifts are always seen in the context of the body. All gifts are given to the church, but not necessarily to (each) individual. Individuals receive only those gifts appropriate for their particular sphere of influence."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Start with me now, O Lord..."

March 27, 2011

Text: 1 Timothy 5:1-8, 17-22

"Worship Inspires Service"

Worship is not just what we do at 11:00 on Sunday morning, but is also what we do in our relationships. Paul is such a busy body! Why can't he leave us alone without suggesting that we be loving in our relationships?

Life is hard enough without having to worry about how we speak to others (1 Timothy 5:1), how we care for folks who are easily overlooked (v. 3), how we get along with those bothersome relatives (v. 8), and how we honor those responsible for administering church life (v. 17). Not only that—but Paul insists that we do all this without playing favorites (v. 21). Oh, yes.

While attending to these matters, we are to remain pure (v. 22).

Say! I just had a thought! This letter is addressed to Timothy, not to Belton, so maybe I can ignore the less savory of these instructions! (Surely the Lord values creativity, so don't you think God will be pleased with my creative excuse for ignoring these biblical injunctions?)

Alas, my excuse does not work. Much of the teaching of the Bible comes when we eavesdrop on God's Word to someone else, what Fred Craddock calls "Overhearing the Gospel." Paul's instruction to Timothy (and to us) is rather detailed. There is a temptation to think that just being sort of generically nice is sufficient. But Paul is more specific:

choose your words carefully (v. 1) with people of all ages (vv. 1-2) and leave off the dirty talk (v.2b). Paul is more specific: teach spiritual values within the family (v. 4). Paul is more specific: make prayer absolutely central in your journey (v. 5). Paul is more specific: take care of your family (v. 8). Paul is more specific: honor and support those who teach and preach (v. 17). Paul is more specific: don't let sin go without rebuke (v. 20). Paul is more specific: do not choose favorites (v. 21). Paul is more specific: take your time choosing leaders (v. 22).

Bishop Marion Edwards used to encourage us to carry a prospect list in our pockets. This was a way to "come down the ladder of abstraction" when it came to witnessing. Maybe that is

the core of these verses in 1 Timothy 5:1-8, 17-22: the worship of God carries with it the names of those whom we shall serve in God's name.

What Someone Else Has Said

In *Questions for the Twenty-first Century Church* (eds., Richey, Lawrence, and Campbell, Abingdon Press), Sarah Kreutziger has written: "Re-imaging contemporary Christian identity: Honoring the roles of 'servant' and 'nurturer,' while recognizing the difference between chosen service and servitude, is a major part in forming moral community."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord, help me give feet to Your call..."

In Loving Memory: *Pinear Mae Windley Epps*

I offer this tribute to all preacher's wives in honor of my mother, Pinear Mae Windley Epps.

Taking two years to write this is procrastination by design; because I know that once I send this, it is one more letting go.

All anticipated arguments aside, I declare that I had the best mother ever. She took care of her husband, her children, and the hundreds of students she taught in school.

She was also 100% dedicated to the responsibilities she accepted when she married a minister, her dear Ralph I. "Preacher" Epps. She played piano and sang in the choir for services; taught Sunday School; led a Circle and WSCS; cooked for every church function; and filled in anytime and anywhere she was needed during their 60-year ministry together.

Pinear (rhymes with "finer") made it clear to us PKs that we were to be perfect angels; which, of course my sisters and I were. We never cut up in church or Sunday School; never passed notes during the service; and always heard every word of daddy's sermons. We were always perfect out in public; and we never fibbed (until now).

My mother's M-F routine went like this: Up early—apron over school clothes—4 out the door full from breakfast—off to school to teach all day—back home and supper for 5—dishes done (always)—lesson plans—Upper Room and bed.

Saturday: Parsonage cleaned—laundry and shopping done—

music, lessons and clothes ready for Sunday—Lawrence Welk—Upper Room and bed.

After church on Sunday; Full meal for 5—her weekly nap—usually another church function—lesson plans—Upper Room and bed.

Reading the newspaper and slaying the crossword puzzle; Andy Griffith and Lucy on TV; and baiting us into losing to her again at Scrabble occasionally found their way in; but the priority was her undying and never-ending devotion to her Lord Jesus Christ.

Her varied skills were recognized and tapped in 1972, when heading up Operation Ours gave her the opportunity to help low-income families living in subsidized housing find ways to run a household on a tight budget.

Daddy always acknowledged their teamwork as the key to any success he had. Each of his 4 retirements saw her briefly looking forward to things she wanted to do for herself. Once he answered The Call again, though, she did not flinch and got back in the saddle with him.

At their last appointment, the small congregation had just one young person; who could not always make it to church. Saturday saw her planning a Sunday School lesson in case there was a need. If no one came, the next week saw her diligently combining 2 lessons into one; and so on, for that one child.

This remarkable devotion; coupled with her giving, caring, compassionate spirit made "Pat" Epps a strong force in God's Army.

No one could match her passion



Pinear Mae Windley Epps

for Duke basketball, either. The only thing that could ever interrupt her kitchen routine was a chance to see Carolina lose.

The part of her strong character that defined her as the gracious hostess was never even threatened as her health failed.

Her dear friend Betty visited during her last days and pulled a chair up close to her bed. I gently woke her and asked, "Mama, do you want some water?"

Then, from behind doses of pain medicine in amounts that baffled her doctors, she turned and noticed that she had a guest. She flashed that beautiful smile and replied, "Yes, but make sure Betty has some too."

In honor of my parents' love for each other, I say:

10 months and 20 days
Between her loving gaze
Into his loving face;
Their place together, back in place
Apart for just 10 months and 20 days.

Isaac Epps

Paid Tribute

DEATHS

CAMERON, Angus M. (Burlington District: retired) died Dec. 12. A memorial service was held Dec. 29 in Chapel Hill.

McADAMS, Charles, former conference treasurer, died Dec. 29. A memorial service was held on Jan. 8 at Benson Memorial UMC: Raleigh.

A Ministry Story: Collards, Collards & More Collards!

By Patricia Archer *

I had never seen so many collards! Nine boxes! . . . and it would have been more if the delivery person had been able to fit more into her car.

My simple request in worship on Dec. 19 was: "We need some fresh collards for the Christmas Eve Community Outreach dinner. George will cook them if someone provides them."

The next day, I got an e-mail from someone who heard the request, asking how much we needed and where should they be delivered.

I replied we'd take whatever she could provide. Little did I know that it would be 9 boxes.

This gift of collards was just a sample of the giving that occurred at Pine Valley UMC on Christmas Eve.

The idea for the Christmas Eve Community Outreach at Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington originated from a simple prayer request of a PVUMC family: "Get us out of ourselves and help us to serve."

Having learned that residents of local recovery houses did not have anywhere to go on Christmas Eve, they decided to provide a meal for them and invite them to evening worship.

It was a simple idea—a small vision—but it grew beyond our imaginations.

Three hundred people were fed that first year (2007) and every year after that, more folks were fed. This Christmas, 2000 people were fed – 1600 people off campus and 400 folks on campus.

Food was taken to local shelters,



The assembly line fills take-out plates that were distributed in the community. In 2010, volunteers of all ages fed 2000 people through an outreach which includes delivery of food to recovery houses and homes and inviting guest to join in evening worship.

recovery houses, and individual homes and after the 5 p.m. worship service, guests from the community joined the PVUMC faith community for dinner. Very quickly, community guests became friends, all of us united as one faith community.

However, the Outreach is not only about feeding people.

The Outreach brings together children, youth and adults at Pine Valley who donate food, cook turkeys, hams and side dishes, deliver meals, make Christmas cards, decorate tables, set up, clean up and do anything that

needs to be done to make the outreach happen.

There's no outreach committee – just a few leaders of the event and many, many hands making it happen.

They come together for the sole purpose of being the hands and feet of Christ.

Like every church that has human beings in it, Pine Valley has its conflicts but as folks serve alongside one another, differences are forgotten.

Throughout the day, tears welled in my eyes as I saw the love of Christ being lived out in the kitchen, the

fellowship hall and the vehicles filled with food. I watched in awe as I saw the miracle of the day.

God touched the hearts of a family with a simple idea, they responded to the call and God produced results that were beyond anything that we could have imagined.

But then, isn't that what God does when we respond? God-ideas become God-miracles.

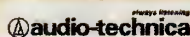
* Patricia Archer, a deacon in Full Connection, is an associate at Pine Valley UMC, Wilmington.



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"Building a Sustainable Ministry to Men" training planned for April 7-9

The Leadership Training Center for Man in the Mirror will present a No Man Left Behind event on April 7-9 hosted at the MERCI Center in Goldsboro.

Through this conference, titled "Building a Sustainable Ministry to Men," principles, practices and components of men's ministry will be explored. These can lead to long-term change for individuals, families, churches and communities.

"My expectations were exceeded; as a trainer and a trainer of trainers, I found this course was one of the best I have ever had," said a participant from Bethel UMC in South Carolina.

Participants at the training will leave with specific plans custom

designed for their church.

Subjects include creating and sustaining momentum, choosing effective strategies, connecting everything to a compelling vision, providing men with next steps in their walk, ways in which to mobilize men already active in the ministry, and maximizing the programs already in place.

The conference is designed for leaders, clergy and laity, who are passionate about seeing men disciplined in their church.

For more information or to register, visit maninthemirror.org/ltc/about-nmlb.htm. For questions, contact Pam Adkins, ministry consultant, at 800-929-2536.



Inside this Issue:

Designated relief giving soars in 2010	2
Change made to sexual ethics hotline number	3
Campbell students minister to street people in Calcutta....	5
April Adult Bible Study	10-11
Child inspires Cokesbury UMC's outreach to veterans.	12

Fairley and Gattis continue serving as district superintendents

Two current district superintendents in their sixth and seventh years of appointment will continue in the same positions for an additional year, Bishop Al Gwinn has announced.

After consultation with the cabinet and appropriate district committees on superintendency, Leonard Fairley will serve another year as Rockingham District superintendent and Bill Gattis will serve another year as Burlington District superintendent.

The normal term for a district superintendent is six years. The appointment can be extended up to two more years at the discretion of the bishop. Fairley is serving his sixth year as a superintendent and Gattis is in his seventh.

Following the death of Rocky Mount District Superintendent Mack McMillian in October 2010 and the consultation process, Bishop Gwinn announced that Tim Russell, assistant to the bishop, would also serve as the interim Rocky Mount District superintendent. A new superintendent, yet to be named, will begin in the district on July 1.

This makes the second time Russell has served in two appointments, one on an interim basis.

In 2008, Paul Leeland was serving as the assistant to the bishop when he was elected a bishop of The United Methodist Church. Bishop Gwinn

See "District superintendents," page 3



(L-R) Jackie Lofgren, Carrboro UMC; Sharon Hensley, Asbury UMC; and Michele Thornton, Greater Heights UMC discuss how a church might respond to an employment problem suggested during the Employment Practices and Personnel Topics seminar. (Conference Photo by Bill Norton)

Churches should be proactive in employment practices, checks and balances, adequate insurance

By Bill Norton *

"It is better to think ahead, to be proactive in planning your policies, education and hiring practices. By being proactive you will have far fewer crises to react to," said Joy Melton in an interview following an employment practices and personnel topics seminar held in mid-February at the United Methodist Building in Garner.

Melton, an attorney and a deacon in The United Methodist Church, is the chief resource officer for United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust (PACT).

She may be better known in the NC Conference as the author of "Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth."

PACT is a denominational insurance trust formed to focus on risk factors facing local church congregations.

In the NC Conference, it is called NCC PACT, a non-profit insurance agency registered in the state to provide property and casualty insurance to churches in the conference.

During the interview she cited three problem areas she has seen in local churches: hiring and disciplinary procedures, financial checks and balances, and being uninsured or underinsured.



Joy Melton

"Not having regular hiring and disciplinary procedures that can be followed and documented" is a problem area for many local churches, she said.

"Document" is my favorite noun and it is my favorite verb and if we use it as both, a noun and a verb, we create records that are helpful to us," she said.

Melton cited Trak-1 Technology and the Gallagher Religious Practice Group as a source for comprehensive background checks at a significantly reduced rate. The NC Conference has partnered with Trak-1 and lists \$9.00 for a basic background check and \$14

if a motor vehicle trace is included. More information on Trak-1 is available on the conference website at <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/files/background-checks1.pdf>.

In the area of financial stewardship, "the failure of churches to operate with a system of checks and balances, to have financial reviews and audits done as cited in the Discipline (church laws) and to have a financial secretary and treasurer who are checking and balancing each other" is important for all churches, Milton said.

Moving to the area of insurance, Milton said, "Churches really do not understand how important it is for them to have workman's comp insurance and sexual misconduct liability insurance. When a local church is uninsured or underinsured in those areas it can ruin the church's ministry, it can put a church right out of business."

Melton advocates working on the issues of employment practices, checks and balances, and insurance now, saying "Pay me now or pay me later."

"If I could just get churches to understand that paying now through the process of training and thinking ahead is so beneficial compared to not taking the time and getting

See "Employment practices," page 3

Designated relief giving soars in 2010

SEJ gives over \$21 million to Advance

By Elliott Wright *

Total United Methodist designated mission giving soared in 2010 as a result of response to the earthquake in Haiti. Designated gifts for missionary support held steady from 2009 to 2010.

In the North Carolina Conference, almost \$1 million was raised in 2010 for Haiti relief.

Figures released by The Advance for Christ and His Church, a designated mission giving channel, indicate that the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) received a total of \$62,338,768 last year.

Of this, \$43,909,314 was earmarked for relief and rehabilitation in Haiti, devastated by an earthquake in January 2010. A total of \$721,988 was received for relief in flood-ravaged areas of Pakistan.

Designated giving for missionary support through the General Board of Global Ministries remained constant at \$6,157,043 in 2010 compared with \$6,151,628 in 2009.

These funds do not include alloca-

tions for missionary support from World Service, the apportioned benevolence fund of the denomination. For the 2011 budget, 37 percent of missionary support is projected to come through World Service.

Giving through The Advance

The total mission giving through The Advance in 2010 was \$79,233,112, with \$10,742,716 designated for worldwide mission projects other than UMCOR or missionary support.

"The generosity of United Methodist people has powerful and specific impacts around the world," said Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of Mississippi, who is chair of the Advance Committee. "One hundred percent of every Advance gift goes for the designated purpose. Through The Advance, we are together a welcoming, healing, and helping presence in the lives of children, women, and men around the world."

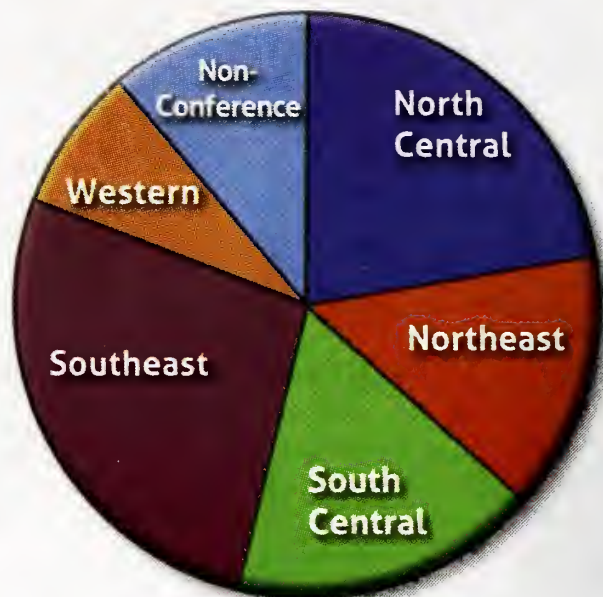
Thomas Kemper, chief executive of Global Ministries, thanked United Methodists for their strong

giving through The Advance in 2010. "Our church has a wonderful record of response to natural and human-caused disasters," he said. "UMCOR continues to be a remarkable expression of our sense of humanitarian responsibility."

"The 2010 total for missionary support through The Advance is also encouraging, indicating a renewed commitment to evangelism, church development, and a wide range of other ministries around the world. We are particularly grateful for increases in designated missionary support in 18 of the 59 US annual (regional) conferences, increases that offset decline in many others."

Giving to Missionaries

"It is the Board's aim to increase the number of missionaries, and the



more support through The Advance the quicker we can do this."

Increases in missionary giving were charted in all jurisdictions, with jumps of more than \$100,000 in the Virginia Conference, \$90,000 in California Pacific, some \$70,000 in Greater New Jersey, \$50,000 in Florida, and in the \$30,000 range in the Baltimore-Washington, Iowa, and Texas Conferences. The Virginia Conference gave a total of \$636,367

See "Designated relief giving," page 6



D.Min. in Congregational Growth and Development in NC

The Congregational Growth and Development D.Min. equips ministers to assess ministry contexts, engage in a narrative approach to research in ministry, use a systems approach to leadership, and employ new insights for ministry in the 21st century. Hosted by Matthews UMC near Charlotte. Learn more at www.drew.edu/theo/dmin.

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Overview of first year of CareNet counseling made by CCCC

Over 365 people sought counseling and consultation services provided by CareNet of NC during the first year of the service, the Conference Clergy Counseling and Consultation Committee has reported.

"The CareNet staff are trained in pastoral counseling approaches, have awareness of United Methodist Church polity, and the challenges faced by clergy and their families as they serve our members and communities," wrote Regina Schaaf Dickens, chair of CCCC, in the report.

Over 2300 hours of counseling were provided during the first year of CareNet conference services.

An additional service through CareNet, listed in the report, is consultation and referral to counseling for pastors to make available to persons in their congregations facing stressful life events and behavioral health problems. CareNet therapists are covered by many insurance carriers in NC and can provide brief interventions for persons seeking more long term solutions and supports.

Services may be accessed by calling regional offices around the state. Some local offices have specific phone numbers: Winston-Salem/Mocksville, 336-716-0800; Greenville/ Rocky Mount/Kinston, 252-355-280; Erwin, 910-897-8930; Fayetteville/Westmont, 910-484-0176; Lumberton/Laurinburg/Pembroke, 910-738-8558; and Wilmington/Bolivia, 910-799-1071.

District superintendents to continue serving *from page 1*

named Russell, the Raleigh District superintendent, to also serve as interim assistant to the bishop until the 2009 Annual Conference.

At that conference, Jon Strother was appointed the Raleigh District superintendent and Russell as assistant to the bishop.

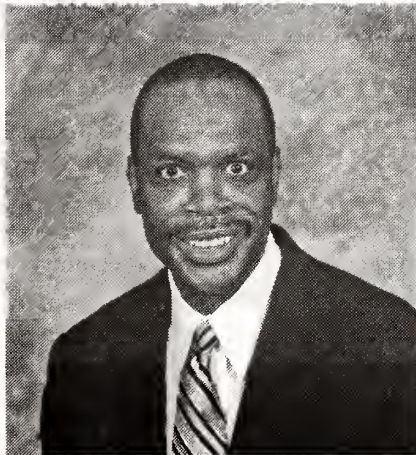
District superintendents oversee

the ministry of clergy and churches in an assigned district. They meet with the bishop as the Conference Cabinet to complete the yearly appointment process for all clergy in the conference.

The maximum number of years anyone can serve as a superintendent is 14 years but no more than eight in 11 years.



Bill Gattis



Leonard Fairley

Employment practices workshop *continued from page 1*

caught up in a claim or litigation issue. Litigation is not therapeutic," Melton said.

She pointed out that when a church is in litigation, many church leaders tend to think they are litigating a principle.

"We want to win on principle. We want to prove we are good people and if it takes \$300,000, for example, then we will go the distance that way," she said. "But, the economic reality is if we pay \$50,000, for example, to settle, we get out of litigation and out of the media and we

can turn our resources to rebuilding the ministry."

Video coverage of Melton's Employment Practices and Personnel Topics presentation is available on the conference website under Resources or go to: vimeo.com/nccumc/albums.

For further information about NCC PACT, visit www.nccumc.org/treasurer/nccpact or call the Program Administrator, Chrisy Powell at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 234.

* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.

Change made to sexual ethics hotline number, new poster for display in local churches

A change in the sexual ethics confidential hotline poster, for display in local churches, has been issued by the Committee on Sexual Ethics of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Effective March 1, a new hotline number will be used. The new poster should replace previous ones used by local churches. Under the new change, persons with any sexual ethics/boundaries issues can call the confidential hotline, leave a report on the website listed on the poster or email the address on the poster. There is also a line for Spanish-speaking persons.

The new poster should be placed in a public area accessible to all local church members and staff. It can be downloaded from the following location: <http://nccumc.org/ministerial-relations/downloads/>.

Anyone wanting to speak with someone regarding sexual abuse, harassment or clergy sexual misconduct can call the confidential hotline for the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church at 1-800-946-2926 or (Spanish-speaking: 800-216-1288)

Reports can be made via email at: reports@lighthouse-services.com (the caller should be identified as being from the NCCUMC) or make a report on the website at: <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/nccumc>.



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Annual Conference 2011

Resolutions due to Conference Secretary by April 15

The deadline for submitting resolutions to the Conference Secretary's office is April 15. Please submit your resolutions to the Conference Secretary via email to smedlin@nccumc.org.

Deadline is May 2 for nominations of General/Jurisdictional delegates

Delegate nomination forms for clergy and laypersons for the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences are on the conference website at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/2012-delegate-nomination-forms/>. Persons interested in placing their name in nomination should read requirements and information on the References site before beginning to complete the appropriate form. Nomination forms are limited to one 8 1/2 x 11" sheet, one side only. Contact the Conference Secretary's office at 800-849-4433, ext. 222 for questions. Forms must be submitted by May 2. General Conference is April 24-May 4, 2012 in Tampa, FL and Jurisdictional Conference is July 18-20, 2012 at Lake Junaluska.

The North Carolina Conference will elect nine clergy and nine lay delegates, a total of 18, to General Conference and will elect nine more clergy and nine more lay delegates, a total of 36, to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Following procedures from past elections, an additional five clergy and five lay persons, are expected to be elected as alternates.

Clergy persons are reminded that only deacons and elders in Full Connection are eligible to be nominated as clergy nominees. Laity who have been a UMC local church member in the conference for two years and active in the UMC for four years are eligible for nomination.

The North Carolina Annual Conference is an inclusive conference. The delegation should be representative of the annual conference considering such factors as sex, age, race, disabling conditions, ethnic background, economic conditions and geographical locations.

The nomination forms are posted on-line alphabetically. As in past years, lay members will receive a booklet containing the form for each lay nominee. The voting will take place at Annual Conference 2011 and will be accomplished by electronic hand-held devices.

The General Conference secretary determines the number of delegates to be elected by using specifications in the denomination's *Book of Discipline*. This is the second quadrennium in a row that the conference delegation has been reduced in size by one clergy and one lay delegate, for a total of two per quadrennium. The number from each conference is based on the number of clergy members and professing members and the number of General Conference delegates.

As specified in the *Discipline*, the church's book of laws, General Conference will have from 600-1000 delegates. With 1000 as the maximum number of delegates, almost all conferences lost delegates to provide representation for growing African conferences. At the 2008 General Conference, The United Methodist Church grew by one million members when the autonomous Protestant Methodist Church of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) was admitted into denominational membership.

Reserving hotel rooms for 2011 Annual Conference - June 15-18

The 2010 Annual Conference will be held in Raleigh at the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC) June 15-18. An agreement with downtown merchants and hotels could result in the conference receiving \$20,200 (toward the facility rental fee) if at least 500 hotel rooms are used by conference members on one night of the conference. The hotels are: Marriott Raleigh City Center, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, and Clarion Hotel State Capital. When calling one of these hotels to make a reservation, ask for The United Methodist Church group rate.

The Marriott is adjacent to the Convention Center, the Sheraton is across the street, and the Clarion, which is near Edenton Street UMC, is about five blocks from the Center.

Arrangements have been made for 200 rooms and a special rate of \$109.00 plus tax per night at both the Marriott and Sheraton and 100 rooms at \$89.00 plus tax per night at the Clarion. The rates at each hotel will change after the designated number of rooms are rented.

The Raleigh R Bus Line, which is free, circulates in the downtown area on a 15 minute cycle. One of the pickup points is near the Clarion.

- Marriott Raleigh City Center - Make reservation by May 14, 2011; (919) 833-1120; Rate: \$109.00 + tax; Online: Go to the link below and adjust the dates accordingly. This will automatically provide the group rate of \$109. <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/rdumc-raleigh-marriott-city-center> OR Phone: 866-260-1270 and refer to "The United Methodist Church" group in June 2011 or refer to the 3-letter code "UMC".
- Sheraton Raleigh Hotel - Make reservation by May 16, 2011; (919) 834-9900; Rate: \$109.00 + tax
- Clarion Hotel State Capital - Make reservation by May 11, 2011; (919) 832-0501; Rate: \$89.00 + tax

Information about 2011 Annual Conference

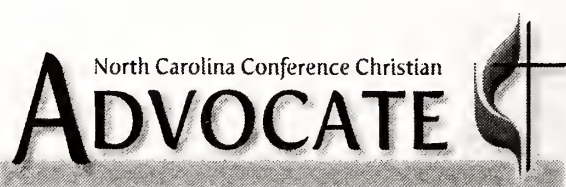
Updated information about Annual Conference, set for June 15-18 at the Raleigh Convention Center is available online at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>. The theme for 2011 is "A Future with Hope: Leading to Christ," and the Durham District is serving as host.

The working agenda currently shows Bishop Gwinn's State of the Church address as set for the evening of Thursday, June 16, and the closing worship service with ordination and commissioning scheduled for the morning of Saturday, June 18.

The working agenda is updated regularly online.

Other items available online include registration information for childcare, display request form, proposed conference rules, resolutions, service projects, special meals and frequently asked questions.

This information is updated regularly by the Conference Secretary's office based on decisions by the Annual Conference Planning Committee. For questions or for those who do not have Internet access, Rev. Jerry Bryan, conference secretary, can be reached at 800-849-4433, ext. 223.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Letters to the Editor: Submissions are welcome. Submission guidelines detailed to the left.

Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

Campbell students won't soon forget street people of India

By Susan Welch *

Unlike many of India's popular movies, there are few happy endings in the slums of Calcutta, a city filled with street people where Campbell University students in Buies Creek served over 250 children and adults on a mission trip sponsored by the Office of the Campus Minister over winter break.

From Dec. 27-Jan. 7, eight Campbell University students accompanied by Graduate Assistant for International Student Services Heather Webb and Terry Tucker, ministry assistant for Campus Ministries at Campbell and children and youth ministries coordinator for Spring Hill UMC in Lillington, traveled to India to work with the international mission organization, Missionaries of Charity.

The group was there to do whatever it could for the people served at the mission centers of Dum Dum, for women, and Nabo Jibon, for men, and the legions of people, both adults and children, who are victims of India's overpopulation and generational poverty.

"They are so poor because, among other things, over-population drains natural resources," said Webb. "And there is a long history of poverty due to the caste system."

The caste system in India is a form



Campbell students Courtney Williamson, left, and Katherine Bellamy play with street children in Calcutta, India.

of social stratification in which people are divided into classes according to their heredity. They can never escape the class into which they are born.

The mission of Webb, Tucker and the students was to tend to the patients' needs whether it was simple care and feeding, helping the sisters at the mission with administrative tasks or playing games and working puzzles with the children and adults, many of whom suffered from physical conditions such as blindness and club foot as well as

mental disabilities. Some were both mentally and physically disabled, Tucker explained.

"Our object was to embody the presence of Christ by offering his love and kindness and by just being present with these people," said Webb, who has served in India before.

For the most part, the Missionaries of Charity take care of their basic needs such as food and clothing, but the people, especially the children, still long for that human touch, said Tucker.

"One day, several students were just playing with the kids on the street and taking pictures. The children were so happy just to be interacting with the Campbell students it broke your heart, and I wondered just how many times a day these children feel like they are nothing," Webb said.

Campbell students who participated in the trip are divinity students David Webb, Karie Parkes and David Anderson, junior Antonio Spears, junior Courtney Williamson, sophomore Katherine Bellamy, senior Alexandra Chin, and senior Amanda Morrison. Each student was responsible for raising his or her money for the trip. Additional financial assistance was provided by Spring Hill UMC in the form of a donation. With this money, the students bought toys, clothes and other items for people they helped.

Divinity student Karie Parks said the trip opened her eyes to a world she never knew existed.

"It's changed my life and the way I want to conduct my ministry," said Parkes. "Mother Teresa advised people to 'find their own Calcutta.' That is what I want to do, look for my own Calcutta closer to home."

* Susan Welch is a staff writer with the Office of University Communications and Publications at Campbell University.

Greensboro College announces new scholarships for UM students

The son and daughter-in-law of a Greensboro College alumna are creating a scholarship program that will offer \$5,000 per year to United Methodist students, with preference given to students from four N.C. congregations to which the family has ties.

Walter L. Newton and his wife, Denise Dilts Newton of Bahama, are creating the Dilts-Newton United Methodist Church Scholarship. Walter Newton's late mother, Mary Hall Newton, graduated from Greensboro College in 1943. He currently serves as vice chairman of the college's Board of Trustees.

The Dilts-Newton United Methodist Church Scholarship will provide \$5,000 per year toward tuition for four students per year, beginning this fall. Preference will be given to students from four United Methodist congregations with which the Newton family has close ties: Stem United Methodist in Stem, Trinity United Methodist in Durham, Chestnut Street United Methodist in Lumberton and Mount Bethel United Methodist in Bahama.

If qualified candidates from those

congregations can't be found, the pool of candidates would be widened to include students from any United Methodist congregations in the two districts, Durham and Rockingham, to which those congregations belong; or from any congregation in the N.C. Annual Conference.

"We are humbled and grateful to receive this gift," said college President Lawrence D. Czarda, Ph.D., after announcing the scholarship at the college's annual Founders Day earlier this year. "Walter and Dennie have been among our strongest support-

ers over the years. We are particularly thankful that this gift will help the college nurture and strengthen its longstanding ties with The United Methodist Church while also bringing a transformative Greensboro College education within reach for more young people."

Newton said the gift was a natural connection between his and his wife's interests and the college's needs.

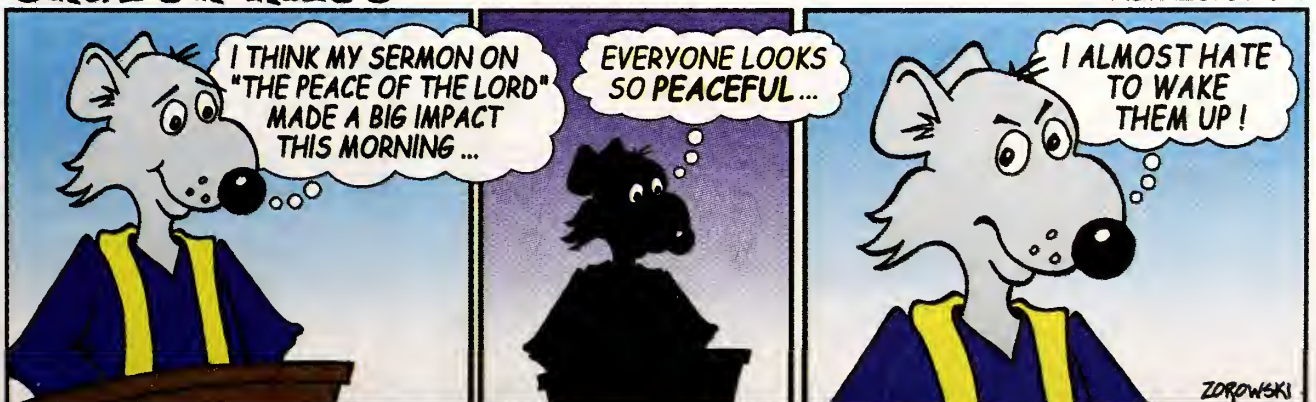
"The college's greatest need is to increase enrollment," he said. "Dennie and I wanted to find a way to help it do that. We also wanted

to honor my mother's memory and nurture the ties between these two institutions that were so important to her, the college and the church."

The Newtons plan to contribute enough money to fully endow the scholarship fund within five to 10 years.

Anyone interested in additional information about the Dilts-Newton Scholarship Program is invited to contact J. Ron Elmore, executive director of financial aid, at 336-272-7102, ext. 253, or relmore@greensborocollege.edu.

Church Mice



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Jurisdictional Conference will meet one day less than previously announced

The dates for the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska in 2012 has be changed to July 18-20, one day less than the previously announced dates.

The conference will officially convene with worship at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, July 18. Consecration of the newly elected Bishops is scheduled for Friday, July 20, at 10 a.m.

Previously, the Consecration of Bishops was scheduled for Saturday. A recent decision by the executive committee of the Council of Bishops resulted in the change. Now, Jurisdictions will begin on July 18 and can conclude by consecrating Bishops on any day thereafter.

Jurisdictional delegates have been encouraged in previous conferences to gather the day before the official opening day of conference for question and answer sessions with episcopal candidates.

The Jurisdictional Program Committee and Local Arrangements Committee are pursuing a new electronic balloting process that would significantly shorten the turn-around time between ballots.

By meeting one day less, SEJ officials have estimated savings of approximately \$30,000 in per diem expenses and each annual conference will save the cost for reserve delegates expenses for one day.

Designated relief giving soars

continued from page 2

Southeastern Jurisdiction: Gifts to The Advance - Ending December 31, 2010

Conference	Project Support	Missionary Support	Total Advance Giving	Church Participation
Alabama/West Florida	\$841,775	\$53,713	\$895,488	55%
Florida	\$2,334,155	\$189,561	\$2,523,716	72%
Holston	\$1,668,618	\$100,544	\$1,769,162	75%
Kentucky	\$844,833	\$39,274	\$884,108	62%
Memphis	\$459,524	\$18,325	\$477,849	57%
Mississippi	\$684,926	\$48,685	\$733,611	52%
North Alabama	\$886,090	\$79,136	\$965,227	44%
North Carolina	\$1,605,772	\$114,405	\$1,720,177	79%
North Georgia	\$1,972,062	\$136,750	\$2,108,812	62%
Red Bird Missionary	\$27,101	\$2,508	\$29,608	56%
South Carolina	\$1,380,719	\$67,633	\$1,448,352	62%
South Georgia	\$877,326	\$120,991	\$998,317	68%
Tennessee	\$840,973	\$47,195	\$888,168	53%
Virginia	\$3,161,352	\$636,367	\$3,797,720	79%
Western North Carolina	\$1,804,994	\$151,174	\$1,956,169	57%
TOTAL	\$19,390,222	\$1,806,261	\$21,196,482	63%

to designated missionary support last year.

The Virginia figure accounted for a large percentage of the \$1.8 million for missionary support from the Southeastern Jurisdiction, which has the largest membership of the five US jurisdictions. Other jurisdictional totals were: North Central, \$1.54 million; Northeastern, \$1.0 million; South Central, \$925,636, and Western \$662,346.

A total of \$8,733,106 came through The Advance from sources other than through annual conferences in 2010. Of that, \$184,774 was for missionary support and the remainder for projects, notably UMCOR.

surer of Global Ministries. "Yet designated gifts through The Advance significantly expand our missionary outreach. In addition, the Covenant Relationships between missionaries and congregations promoted by The Advance are among the most effective means of mission education."

The Development Office of Global Ministries, which includes The Advance, puts a strong emphasis on missionary support and covenants in 2010--an emphasis that is continuing. Missionaries are prominent in the ongoing educational initiative called 10-Fold, which presents mission and missionary opportunities through digital communication, including webcasts and social networks. UMCOR projects are also prominent in the 10-Fold emphases.

Importance of World Service

"World Service remains primary in the funding for our missionaries," said Roland Fernandes, general trea-

Making a Difference

"We are reaching a new generation of United Methodists and potential church members through 10-Fold, while underscoring the importance of persons and families that have been involved in mission for many years," said the Rev. Shawn Bakker, associate general secretary for Development and director of The Advance.

"United Methodist people want to make a difference in our world," said Bishop Ward. "We want to relieve suffering, to increase hospitality and healing, to promote peace and well-being. Through The Advance, our hope of impact is realized, even as those helped are a means of grace to us."

* Elliott Wright is the information officer of the General Board of Global Ministries.

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CCT celebrates 2010 apportionment report, reviews budgets

During a day of reviewing and discussing line item budgets in late January, the Conference Connectional Table learned that 90.99% of apportionments were paid for 2010 by local churches. The amount is less than 1% down from last year's figure of 91.85%.

The number of churches paying 100% was in the upper 80s, a higher number than last year. Many smaller churches were back to 100% payment of apportionments.

Most of the meeting was a review of proposed budgets from the four CCT teams: Outreach Ministry, Leadership, Christian Formation, and Stewardship. Each team previously discussed budget line items for areas within their team. The recommendation from each team was presented to CCT.

Following each team presentation, all CCT members could ask for clarification, if needed. After presentations, the CCT voted on the suggested budget which goes to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. CFA will decide the final budget which will go to the Annual Conference for action.

The CCT holds quarterly meetings during the year. Each team discusses a specific focus which is then discussed by the CCT. The focus topics are: Visioning, Strategic Planning, Budget, and Evaluation.



Emily Innes, (center) chair of the Conference Connectional Table, reviews points being discussed during the CCT meeting before a vote is taken. To her left is Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, and to her right is Carol Goehring, executive director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization. (Photos by Bill Norton)



Gypsie Murdaugh (center), chair of the Commission on Stewardship, listens to the discussion during the CCT meeting. Others in the photo are (l-r) Melba McCallum, CCT at-large member; Murdaugh; Eldrick Davis, at-large member; and Woo IL (Paul) Lee, at-large member.

United Methodist Dollars For Scholars scholarships

Each year through the United Methodist Dollars for Scholars (UMDFS) program, the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation (UMHEF) provides \$1,000 matching scholarships.

These are given to United Methodist students who have received a \$1,000 scholarship from their local United Methodist church to help them attend a United Methodist-related college, university, or seminary. Awards are made for the fall term of each school year.

The deadline to apply has been extended to April 11. To learn more about this program and/or to fill out an online application visit: <https://www.umhef.org/applications/UMDFS.php>.



Charles Mosley (looking up), chair of the CCT Christian Formation Team, presents the work of his team. Also in the photo, all members of the CCT, are (l-r) Sam Loy, chair of missions; Grace Hackney, at-large-member; Brian Wingo, chair of Church and Society; Christine Harman, Christian Formation Team coordinator; Mosley; Chuck Cook, Cabinet representative; and Tom Greener, chair of the Stewardship Team.

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OCEAN FRONT CONDO for rent at Villa Dunescape, Atlantic Beach, NC. Top floor with skylight, elevator access, 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 4TVs, WiFi connection, screened porch overlooks pool and

ocean. Off-season rates available. Contact Sally Dillon by e-mail jesbdillon@yahoo.com or by phone (919) 931-3295 (Raleigh, NC).

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EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd.,

Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska - 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom townhouse, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs! Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccumc.org.

PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.

The three conference camps plan spring open houses

The three conference camp and retreat centers are holding open houses this spring.

- ♦ The Camp Rockfish Open House will be Sunday, April 17 from 1-7pm. Dinner will be served at 5pm followed by a worship experience. Contact the camp to RSVP if you would like to attend: 910-425-3529 ext 21 or email info@camprockfish.org.
- ♦ Camp Chestnut Ridge has schedule the Open House for May 1 from 1pm - 5pm. There will be activities for kids aged 6 to 96. The spring open house is an open invitation to church members, friends, neighbors, and anyone interested in what happens at camp. It is free of charge, but donations will be accepted.
- ♦ The Don Lee Open House will be May 15 from 2 - 7:30 p.m. Join others for a day of sailing, swimming, canoeing, and crafts with an all-camp picnic. There is no charge to attend but RSVPs would be appreciated by calling 1-800-535-5475 ext. 22 or e-mailing info@donleecenter.org.

conference CALENDAR

March

- 1 ReJesus Conference and Gathering of the Elders, 9 a.m., Edenton Street UMC:
- 13 Girl Scout Sunday
- 15 - 19 Global Vision
- 18 - 20 Ebony Youth Retreat, Lake Junaluska
- 19 Clergy Partners Day Apart, St. Luke UMC: Sanford, 9:30am
- 21 Leadership Summit, Garner UMC, 10 a.m.
- 29 Conference Council on Finance and Administration, UM Building

- 4 - 7 SEJ Clergywomen's Conference, Emory Conference Center, Atlanta, GA
- 5 - 7 Clergy Academy of Christian Witness
- 5 Holistic Stewardship: Reinvigorating Your Church's Efforts to Serve, 10 a.m., Garner UMC
- 6 Council of Bishops Leadership Summit Webcast, St. James UMC: Greenville, 12 p.m.
- 7 - 9 Man in the Mirror Men's Conference, MERCI: Goldsboro
- 17 - 23 Holy Week
- 22 Good Friday (UM Building closed)
- 24 Easter
- 26 Conference Committee on Communications meeting, 10 a.m., UM Building

NCC events are available
online at [www.nccumc.org/
calendar](http://www.nccumc.org/calendar)

April

- 1 - 3 Kaleidoscope
- 3 One Great Hour of Sharing
- 4 - 8 Full Connection interviews

Upcoming Special Sundays

One Great Hour of Sharing - April 3

One Great Hour of Sharing is just a few weeks away. Order free resources and start planning for the April 3 offering. This annual offering underwrites UMCOR's "costs of doing business." UMCOR receives no World Service funds or any other apportionments.

Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing help to "keep the lights on" and cover UMCOR's costs of doing business, laying the foundation for UMCOR to seek justice and mercy for suffering people everywhere. The agency's top ratings by Charity Navigator and the American Institute of Philanthropy attest to UMCOR's financial accountability.

One Great Hour of Sharing resources for churches are available online at <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/give/oghs/> or can be ordered by phone at 888-346-3862. Items available include offering envelopes, posters, a children's sermon and liturgical resources.

Native American Ministries Sunday to be observed May 22

Native American Ministries Sunday is one of the six churchwide Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. Native American Ministries Sunday nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians. It is typically celebrated on the third Sunday of Easter, May 8, which is Mother's Day. However, in the North Carolina Conference, Mother's Day is designated for a Retirement Homes offering. Thus, Native American Sunday for the conference has been changed to May 22. Local churches can choose to celebrate it on another Sunday.

Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to develop and strengthen local Native American ministries. In the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the UMC, North Carolina has the largest number of Native American ministries established.

Native American Ministries Sunday resources, free for churches, are available online at www.umcsgiving.org/nams or can be ordered by phone at 888-346-3862. Items available include offering envelopes, posters, a PowerPoint presentation, video and liturgical resources.

ZOE Ministry offers mission moments video clips for children

ZOE Ministry is offering a package of five mission moments, designed especially for children. The free package includes five video clips with accompanying take-home mission papers, each highlighting a specific mission project:

- 1) helping orphans get food to eat; 2) helping orphans stay healthy; 3) helping orphans earn money; 4) teaching orphans to love Jesus; and 5) providing homes for orphans.

The videos and handouts can be used with Vacation Bible school, Sunday school, or Children's Church.

The materials can be downloaded from the ZOE website, www.zoeministry.org or can be requested on DVD by using a form on the website.

For more information about the children's mission moment resources or about the ministry of ZOE, call 1-800-951-0234.

Faith-Based Cruising with Educational Opportunities

Gems of the Baltic
with Guest Speaker
Bishop Woodie White
September 2, 2011

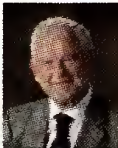


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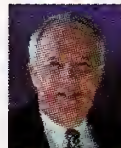


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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Caring for Creation - March 31-April 3

Life in the world today is challenged by how to care for the gift of Earth given to all by God. Caring for Creation helps members of faith communities learn how to take care of the Earth that is often taken for granted.

The Caring for Creation experience provides the Biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of the home, Earth. For details, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation/.

Holistic Stewardship - April 5

In partnership between the Conference's Stewardship Committee and the Academy for Leadership Excellence, a workshop called "Holistic Stewardship: Reinigorating your Church's Efforts to Serve" is being offered on Tuesday, April 5. Led by Mike Slaughter, lead pastor of Ginghamburg UMC, Ohio, the workshop is being hosted by Garner UMC, 201 Methodist Drive, Garner from 10am-3pm. Cost of the event is \$25 and includes lunch.

View stewardship as a means to celebrate God and find servants (volunteers) in the church. Join transformational leader Mike Slaughter as he speaks about ways to encourage a congregation's efforts. Slaughter's inspirational sessions will focus in two areas: church growth and church finances.

True church growth is not about how many people are attending. The true greatness of any church is measured by how many people serve the marginalized. The business of the church is to engage and empower disciples of Jesus in meeting the needs and closing the gaps of disparities for the least of these.

The workshop will cover common "money myths" that people don't want to talk about money and people don't want to give and discuss a comprehensive 12-month stewardship program that connects people to the felt need and the mission, rather than the church budget.

Updated Clergy Academy of Christian Witness - April 5-7

The Commission on Evangelism is offering the Clergy Academy of Christian Witness, April 5-7 at Camp Rockfish. Because sessions have been revamped to address changing needs of ministry, this training is open to ALL clergy. Space is limited; first come-first served! Contact Robin Harry at rharry@nccumc.org or 1-800-849-4433. Information at <http://nccumcevangelism.org>.

Men's Ministry training April 7-9

The Leadership Training Center for Man in the Mirror will present a No Man Left Behind event on April 7-9 hosted at the MERCI Center in Goldsboro. Through this conference, titled "Building a Sustainable Ministry to Men," principles, practices and components of men's ministry will be explored. Participants at the training will leave with specific plans custom designed for their church. Subjects include creating and sustaining momentum, choosing effective strategies, connecting everything to a compelling vision, providing men with next steps in their walk, ways in which to mobilize men already active in the ministry, and maximizing the programs already in place. For more information or to register, visit maninthemirror.org/ltc/about-nmlb.htm. For questions, contact Pam Adkins, ministry consultant, at 800-929-2536.

Prophetic ministry conference April 9

The 3rd Annual Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry will be held at Avent Ferry UMC in Raleigh on April 9, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The theme is "One Bread, One Body: Embracing Diversity." The conference is an annual one-day gathering for NC faith leaders to learn, dialogue and respond to issues related to the local history of prophetic ministry and faith-based values of social justice. This year's the focus will be on faith and diversity and specifically the Wake County Schools as a front line of a national trend toward dismantling school diversity policies. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. James Lawson, pastor emeritus of Holman UMC of Los Angeles, distinguished visiting professor at Vanderbilt University, and a renowned Civil Rights Movement leader. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called him "the leading strategist and theorist of

non-violence in the world." The guest preacher is the Rev. Dr. William Barber II, president of the North Carolina NAACP.

The event is sponsored by the NC Annual Conference Chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action. It is co-sponsored by the NC chapter of the NAACP, Great Schools in Wake, The NC NAACP, NC Council of Churches, the NC Conference Board of Church and Society, Black Methodists for Church Renewal, the Jack and Kay Crum Endowment for Prophetic Ministry, and Avent Ferry UMC and other religious and civic organizations.

The cost is \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door and \$15 for students. The checks can be made payable to MFSA-NC and mailed to MFSA-NC c/o Henry Jarrett PO Box 18311 Raleigh NC 27619-8311. For more information contact Henry Jarrett at 919-606-5674 or jarretth@bellsouth.net.

Unity Dialogue meets on April 27

The Unity Dialogue will meet April 27, at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Discussion will focus on an article first printed in 1996 in Christian Century magazine, by Walter Wink, called "Homosexuality and the Bible." Now available online, the article can be found at <http://forusa.org/articlesandresources/wink-homosexuality.html>. Permission to print the article is given at the end of the site. Now in its 12th year, the Unity Dialogue is committed to civil conversation about the challenging topic of homosexuality. The dialogue is open to all. The gathering at Methodist University is at 3 p.m., in the Heritage Room, and following worship with communion, Bishop Al Gwinn will facilitate the discussion. Anyone is welcome to attend the dialogue.

Race of Grace Weekend-April 29-May 1

The Race of Grace weekend unites athletes and amateurs, friends and strangers for three inspirational days of golfing, walking, running, and biking. The mission is to alleviate suffering by partnering with organizations serving those in the community who are impacted by poverty. Since 2004, over \$275,000 has been donated. Registration for all three events, information about recipient agencies, and resources for churches are online at www.RaceofGrace.org.

- ♦ Links of Grace Golf Tournament is a 4-Person Superball (Captain's Choice) event held Friday, April 29, at the Neuse Golf Club in Clayton. Shotgun starts are at 8:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Pre-registration required.
- ♦ Tour de Grace Bike Ride takes off Saturday, April 30. This 32- and 52-mile bike tour through Franklin County begins at 9:00 AM at Louisburg College.
- ♦ Race of Grace 5K Walk/Run begins at 4 PM on Sunday, May 1, at Edenton Street United Methodist Church in downtown Raleigh.

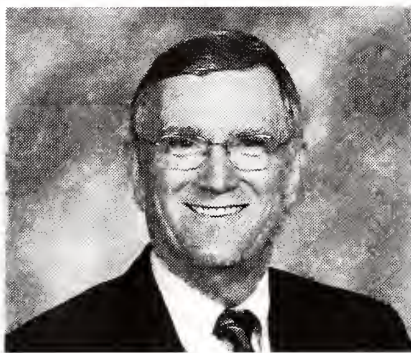
Change the World - May 14-15

Churches are encouraged to discern ways for participation in the second Change the World event planned for the weekend of May 14-15. This is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service - locally and globally. During the May weekend, United Methodist churches are encouraged to create and participate in a service or fundraising event that helps bring about positive change, whether it's cleaning up school grounds, renovating homes or getting involved in global health issues like malaria.

Churches can take advantage of existing ministries or initiate a new outreach event. For more information, visit the Change the World web page at UM Communications at umcom.org/changetheworld.

Cross-Racial/Cultural Appointments in the Global Church - May 16-18

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) has opened registration for "Facing the Future: Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments in a Global Church," May 16-18 in Los Angeles, Calif. The event features special learning tracks and will bring together experts at all levels of the cross-racial/cross-cultural appointment process to resource and train leaders impacting CR/CC appointments to be effective and create a community for connection and dialogue on issues relating to CR/CC appointments. Registration, \$300, is open March 1-April 15. For information, visit www.gcorr.org/crccevent.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

April 3, 2011

Text: 2 Timothy 2:8-15 "Re-membering Jesus Christ"

When I saw the title of this week's lesson, my first thought was of all those Communion tables on which I have seen the words: "Do this in remembrance of me."

We usually think of "remembering" as an act of recall and a function of memory. Of course, Christians want to be mindful of Christ, but there is another dimension to "remembering."

To re-member something is to put the members back together again. Re-membering Christ is to put his "members" back together—the wholeness of Christ.

This image gives special power to the Church as the "body of Christ," the body in which Christ's body is put together again!

In the Wesleyan tradition, we

speak of the "real presence" of Christ at the Communion table. Christ is remembered; Christ is re-membered.

The author of this letter to Timothy gives a very broad hint (instruction?) on how we go about remembering Christ: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him..." (2 Timothy 2:15).

The faith experience is action as well as word.

Note how verse 15 combines "worker" with "explaining the word of truth." There is no point in "understanding it right" unless we also "do it right!" Truth is of the essence of remembering Christ, but "wrangling over words" does not help us (2 Timothy 2:14). Christ is the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:11 offers a refresher course in the meaning of baptism. Compare this verse ("If we have died with him, we shall also live with him") with Colossians 2:12: "when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."

These verses from 2 Timothy 2 echo the life of the worshiping community: re-membering (Holy Communion—verse 8) and baptism (verse

11). Then, there is this thing about being a worker (verse 15). Maybe that is why we call it "a worship service".

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-1945* (T & T Clark), Ferdinand Schlingensiepen has quoted a letter from Bonhoeffer: "But to put off acting and taking a position simply because you are afraid of erring...seems to me almost to go against love. To delay or fail to make decisions may be more sinful than to make wrong decisions out of faith and love."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy God, whom we have seen in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, bless us now that we—as the body of Christ—might be in this world the presence of our Lord. Touch with grace our effort to be faithful workers, worshiping, serving, and truth-telling..."

April 10, 2011

Text: Jude 17-25
"Praise Builds Us Up"

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* series.

Jude is one of those books in the Bible that makes you wish you had paid attention decades ago when some Vacation Bible School teacher tried to get you to memorize the order of the books of the Bible.

It is hard to find, tucked away between the scandalous Book of Revelation and the fourteen verses of 3 John.

Bede the Venerable (673-735) was one the first to state what most students of the Bible have concluded: "Jude's main purpose in writing was to combat false teaching in the church." It's a short letter but it is packed with problems with false teachers.

The problem seems to be "certain intruders" (v. 4). The problem seems to be those who "defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones" (v. 8).

The problem seems to be "blemishes on your love feasts" (12). The problem seems to be people who are "waterless clouds" (v. 12).

The problem seems to be "grumblers and malcontents" (v. 16). The problem seems to be "scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts" (v. 18). The problem seems to be "these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit" (v. 19).

Gasp! That is a lot of problems! Even so, Jude advises the believers to be merciful in dealing with those folks who are on the fence (vv. 22-23), to show mercy to those who have been hoodwinked by these false teachers.

(Note to self: Self, try a little mercy on those who have fallen for prosperity theology or who have "Rapture in coming and I'm out of here" bumper stickers or who find the Bible made out of concrete instead of the living Breath of God.)

The closing two verses of Jude are often heard as a benediction.

What great words of encouragement! Just when we despair of ever being good enough to be in the presence of God, Jude reminds us that it is God who makes us ready to be in God's presence (v. 24).

Just when we think that our slipping and sliding in the faith journey will keep us from standing before God, Jude reminds us that it is God who will keep us from falling (v. 24).

To such a God belongs praise (v. 25)! This God revealed in Jesus Christ lives beyond the boundaries of time as we know it (v. 25). This is Jude's

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April Adult Bible study *continued from page 10*

way of reminding us that there is no place to hide from God's love.

What Someone Else Has Said:

William H. Willimon (*With Glad and Generous Hearts*, The Upper Room), wrote this about benedictions: "In the Bible, worship is always concluded with blessing. Therefore, an important function of priests is to bless people. Israel's priests are those who bless....To bless people in the name of the God of Israel is to literally lay God's name on them, to 'put my name upon the people of Israel' (Numbers 6:27)."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Glory and majesty is Yours..."

April 17, 2011

Text: Mark 11:1-11
"Hosanna!"

I am almost embarrassed to tell you my initial thoughts when I read this week's text.

Remember how Jesus told the disciples that if they went and asked for a colt for him to ride into Jerusalem, to tell anyone who asked why they were taking the colt that it would be returned immediately (Mark 11:3)?

Okay so far.

Then the disciples bring the colt to Jesus (v. 7). He rides it into Jerusalem (v. 11). A fairly good crowd had time to gather for all this, having taken the time to cut leafy branches (v. 8).

Jesus looked around things at the temple (v. 11). By then it had gotten late, so he and the twelve disciples head out for Bethany (v. 11).

Now here was my first reaction: Did anyone ever take the colt back?

Of course, Matthew, Luke, and John each have their own way of telling this Palm Sunday story.

For example, in Luke, Jesus ends up crying over the city of Jerusalem. In Matthew, while at the temple, Jesus does a number on the money changers.

In John, the crowd was mostly people who had seen him raise Lazarus from the dead.

Unless force fed, the accounts do not agree on detail. Does this mean that something is amiss in the Palm Sunday texts? Hardly.

If you are in a class, ask members to tell what they passed as they entered the classroom. Even if they walked the same hallway, the answers will vary quite a bit.

Each person has his or her own eyes for observing: some see a poster; some see a grandchild; some see dust in the windowsill; some see a newcomer; some see an unused study book.

The gospel writers each have their own eyes for remembering, their own voices for telling, their own hearts for understanding the Palm Sunday trek.

At the core is one reality: Jesus made an entry into the Holy City in the name of God. Some saw this as a sign that God's kingdom, God's reign, promised to David, was about to break into history.

"Hosanna" (v. 9) is a form of the Aramaic words for "Help us! Save us!"

In Mark's text, it is balanced with a cry of praise: "Blessed in he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Isn't that the way we call out to Jesus?

"Lord, we need Your help, for which we give You the praise." That is a powerful witness: to ask for God's help and to thank God for that help in the next sentence!

When we are at our best, we acknowledge that God is to be praised even before we experience the results of our cry for help.

I guess it is a way of saying, "We know that You will get it done, O Lord!" I still wonder who took the colt back.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Vincent Taylor (*The Gospel According to St. Mark*, St. Martins) says "Unable to deny that He is the promised Messiah, He seeks to show to His disciples and to the crowd what kind of Messiah...not the Messiah of their (warlike) hopes."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Save us! Hosanna! We praise You..."

April 24, 2011

Text: Matthew 28:1-17
"Christ Is Risen!"

Even in the midst of the joy of Easter, there is sadness. Even in the brilliance of "He is risen!" there is a tug of grief. I find that "down side of Easter" in several places in Matthew's account.

For example, how sad that there are eleven disciples, not twelve, who go to meet Jesus in Galilee (v. 16). Judas is gone.

Do you think of persons who have once been excited about the life of faith who now simply are no longer

a part of the community of believers?

How sad that when the disciples saw Jesus, some still doubted (v. 17).

Do you think of persons who are waiting for more evidence of God's love and presence before they commit themselves to worship the Lord?

How sad that religious leaders spread self-serving news even though it was not true (vv. 12-13).

Do you think of persons who have failed even when we have trusted them for our faith development?

How sad that the soldiers thought money was more important than truth (v. 15).

Do you think of persons who value personal power in its various guises—wealth, position, prestige, influence, false humility—over a life of service and truth?

How sad that the guards who told about the resurrection appearance of Jesus did not understand what they had seen (v. 4).

Do you think of persons who are regularly exposed to the gospel message but who do not seem to grasp its life-changing implications?

How sad that once a false story gets planted that there are those who prefer to pass it on in lieu of dealing

with the truth (v. 15).

Do you think of people who find pleasure in passing on rumors and innuendo?

Yes, there is sadness in the mix of Easter events. But the pages of history have turned and will never go back to what used to be. Death has been shown for the imposter it is. Sin has been shown the limits of its power. Defeat has been overcome by victory.

Even with the sadness of some of the story, I think that deserves an "Alleluia!" Happy Easter!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Jesus Laughed* (Abingdon Press), Robert Darden wrote: "(In) The Greek Orthodox Church...many churches still follow the ancient custom of setting aside the entire day following Easter for twenty-four hours of non-stop humor, comedy, joking, and laughter, because 'the big joke God pulled on Satan in the Resurrection.'"

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thank You, Lord, simply thank you..."

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around the CONFERENCE

Child inspires Cokesbury UMC's outreach to veterans' home

By Michael N. Nelson *

It is easy to help make a veteran feel appreciated! Cokesbury UMC in Stedman is sharing God's love with the residents of the Veteran's Home in Fayetteville.

In December, the youth and others from the church remembered all 150 residents with blankets, ornaments, Beanie Babies and Christmas cards. In January, all residents received cards and socks, which were donated by the church and individuals all over the country (thanks to Facebook). Amputees received sock monkeys.

This project was created by one of the children, Cavan Brewer, age 9, at Cokesbury. His dad, Steven Brewer, is an Army Captain, and his mom, Chelle, was honored by President George W. Bush as 2008 "Military Spouse of the Year".

Cavan was touched by the fact that some who have bravely served the United States, like his dad, are sometimes forgotten. His 3 year-old adopted brother from China, JiaQun,

has participated since he joined the family in September of last year.

Members of Cokesbury UMC visit the Veteran's Home at least once a month on holidays. There were 2000 Valentines delivered on February 14.

In March, more socks and St. Patrick's Day cards will be delivered. On Easter Sunday, an egg hunt will be provided for the residents. Therefore, plastic eggs, sugar free candy, more socks and Easter cards are being collected. Upcoming visits are scheduled for Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and Father's Day.

The members of Cokesbury UMC want to make sure the veterans know that they care about them and that God loves them.

Anyone interested in participating in this outreach is invited to contact Cokesbury UMC, P.O. Box 280, Stedman, NC 28391.

This ministry makes a world of difference.

* Michael N. Nelson is pastor of Cokesbury UMC, Stedman.



Cavan Brewer (right) shares a stuffed animal gift with a resident at the veteran's home in Fayetteville. He was inspired to initiate this ministry of Cokesbury UMC after learning that some who have served in the military are forgotten.



Many members of Cokesbury UMC have participated in this ministry, and support has come from across the country. (LEFT) JiaQun spends a moment with a veteran's home resident. (RIGHT) Cavan enjoys a game of checkers

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North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

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Inside this Issue:

Conference youth lead the way.....	2
Japan Emergency: A Letter from UMCOR	3
Annual Conference Information	4
Disciple prison outreach expands in six states	7
May Adult Bible Study.....	10-11

New collection includes music, prayers, litanies, resources for worship

By Barbara Dunlap-Berg *

From the rousing "Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child" to the prayerful "Open the Eyes of My Heart," the newly released "Worship & Song" collection offers something for just about everyone.

"Worship & Song," jointly developed by the United Methodist Board of Discipleship and the United Methodist Publishing House, contains 190 hymns and worship songs, including old-time gospel favorites and contemporary praise songs.

New worship-planning resources in the collection supplement "The United Methodist Hymnal" and other songbooks.

"There is always good, new congregational music being written," said Gary Alan Smith, senior music editor at Abingdon Press and project director for "Worship & Song."

"Worship & Song" is actually two publications in one — a songbook and a collection of prayers, litanies, liturgies and short items for worship planners, pastors, leaders and musicians.

The collection "contains a greater number of songs that are currently shaping the future of congregational song, and it represents more contemporary styles and idioms than have previous publications," said Dean McIntyre, who serves as a director of music resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

Musician Bryan R. Dunn, 30, said, "I like that 'Worship & Song' takes some of the old hymns from Cokesbury and puts a new twist on them."

"This new book has a very eclectic variety of musical styles so it can be used in any church service at any church. (It) makes you want to stand up and clap, and at the same time, it covers the necessity for somber times."

Best of all, Dunn said, the new worship resource has the potential to "spice up the interest and keep people coming to church."

Wesleyan heritage

"Methodism was born in song," said the Rev. Carlton R. Young, who edited both the 1966 and the 1989 hymnals.

Charles Wesley's lyrics set to the popular tunes of his day led countless people to join the Methodist movement founded by Charles' older brother, John.

One of the most popular Charles Wesley hymns is "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," which he wrote in 1738 to celebrate his conversion. That classic — with few exceptions — has been the opening hymn of every Methodist song collection worldwide.

It opens "Worship & Song" as well. But contemporary composer Mark Miller's rendition gives the song a contemporary, can't-get-the-tune-out-of-one's-head flavor while retaining the grandeur and beauty of the original hymn.

"One of the byproducts of this new collection is to bridge what I think are really ambiguous terms — 'traditional' and a so-called 'contemporary' music — and to say, 'This is what it means to be in both camps,'" Young said.

The Rev. Delores J. Williamston agrees. The songbook breathes new life into worship by blending old favorites with newer, less familiar songs, she said. Williamston, an African American whose congregation is predominantly white, serves First UMC in Independence, Kan. "This is a great tool for a more multicultural ... as well as multigenerational worship experience," she added.

One of the greatest challenges in church music is striking a balance between the comfortable and the cutting-edge, said the Rev. Charlie Overton.

The associate pastor of worship and discipleship at Hillcrest UMC, Nashville Tenn., said he wants to mix songs that get people eagerly singing along with newer texts that inspire people to look at the Christian faith in new ways.

He appreciates the inclusion of music from contemporary Christian artists and composers in "Worship & Song."

Many United Methodist congregations are already using some of these songs, he pointed out. Having them in an official church songbook gives them added legitimacy and authority for use in worship.

See "New collection for worship," page 7



Nan de Andrade (back left), Minister of Music at Aldersgate UMC in Durham, sings with attendees during the opening plenary session of the ReThinking Worship and Song event in Nashville, TN. Singing and clapping in the front are worship consultant, Marcia McFee (left) and GBGM's Debra Tyree (right). (Top two photos by Kathleen Berry, UMNS)



Kathy Wilkinson (left), pastor of Worship Life at Mt. Sylvan UMC, Durham, shares her thoughts with Jay Locklear (right), director of worship and technology at St. Luke UMC: Sanford. Locklear co-wrote "Covenant Prayer," with the Rev. Adam Seate of St. Luke UMC: Goldsboro, which is included in the new book. (Bottom two photos by LeeAnne Thornton, NC Conference)



Betsy Curtis, Director of Music Ministries at Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington, enjoyed playing with the band during the Wednesday morning plenary session led by Marcia McFee.

Conference Youth Lead the Way



Garris Chapel MYF outside the church are (left to right), Front row kneeling – Heather Frey, Virginia Grady, Deanna Spence, Steve Denhup, Jordan Loreman, Mary Ella Spengler, Rebecca Grady, Kelsey Morris, Kayla Lane; Standing – Cassidy Goff, Jordan Edwards, Sydney Bowers, Tara Davis, Stacie Salter, Clara Whiteside, Chris Nichols, Dylan Smith, Mason Wiggins; and Back row – Andrew Paphitis, CJ Cosma, Amber Edwards, Tyler Fitzpatrick. The crosses, constructed and prayed over by the youth, represent children dying of starvation.

Garris Chapel youth raise funds to feed world's poorest children as part of 30-Hour Famine

By Steve Denhup *

Wars and natural disasters dominate the world's daily headlines, but behind the scenes and far from the spotlight, hunger and preventable diseases claim the lives of 24,000 of the world's children every day.

More than one billion people go hungry every day. More than six billion live on the planet. One in six will go hungry tonight.

Why so many? For some families, the only food they have is whatever they can grow themselves. One drought or flood can wipe out a year's harvest. When it does, there's no supermarket or food bank they can turn to. Others can barely afford food despite their best efforts. Either way, hunger is anything but yesterday's problem. For one billion people, it's a problem right now.

But world hunger is 100 percent preventable, and teens from Garriss Chapel's MYF in LeGrange were ready to help.

On Feb. 25-26, Garriss Chapel MYF joined the efforts of hundreds of thousands of young people all over the nation who set aside the usual "week-end stuff" that fills their daily lives.

Instead, they did World Vision's 30 Hour Famine because they are "Love Hungry" – the theme for this year.

By going without food for 30 hours, they got a taste of what the world's poorest children and families face every day. Prior to the event

weekend, they raised funds with the knowledge that every \$30 raised would help feed and care for a child for a month. The students were also encouraged to perform hands-on service projects during the weekend in order to make a difference in their own communities.

Garris Chapel's MYF constructed and prayed over 360 crosses. Each cross represents a child dying of starvation: one cross, one hour, 360 crosses. In addition, they held a candle light worship service to bring awareness to the community.

This year, Garriss Chapel's MYF raised \$3,000 in support of World Vision's 30 Hour Famine.

The funds raised by Garriss Chapel's MYF and other participants help feed and care for children in communities in need around the globe through World Vision. A portion of the funds raised assist families in need in the United States.

Famine funds contribute to World Vision's response in areas where famine, conflict, and other crises make children vulnerable to hunger and preventable disease.

Since 1992, 30 Hour Famine has raised close to \$140 million, representing countless lives saved. World Vision works in nearly 100 countries, helping approximately 100 million people every year.

* Steve Denhup is director of Children and Youth Ministries at Garriss Chapel UMC.

Sanford District's Change for Children raises \$5,660 for Haiti

By Roberta Byram *

It all began with children...children leading the way.

The Sanford District invited Helen Little, a layperson from Clayton who has made over 50 mission trips to Haiti, to be the speaker at the Sanford Lay Rally in February to share her ministry with the children of Haiti.

Little recently returned from her 51st trip to Haiti to minister to the children at the Ryan Epps Orphanage which she founded. She has shared her message many times, "Don't give up on Haiti. The only way things will change in Haiti is one child at a time."

As the District Board of Laity gathered and planned the Lay Rally, children were always on the hearts and minds of the program planners.

It was through the quest with children leading the way for the children of Haiti, the theme "Change for Children" developed.

The churches in the Sanford District reached out to the children in the district by asking them to lead the way for children in Haiti.

They gathered jars and asked for change to fill the jars to purchase school books for the Haitian children on Helen Little's waiting list.

Months before the rally, she informed members of the district

that she had 180 children on a waiting list for school. Each child needed a uniform and \$25 for school books.

The Sanford District children were determined to gather enough change for 180 school book packs.

At the Lay Rally, the Sanford District children came forward with singing and gifts for Little to take to the children in Haiti. They presented her with a cooperation quilt put together with small hands loving God and children all over the world. The names of the Sanford District children were on the quilt.

They presented 500 beanie babies from a collector in Lemon Springs who came forward with a conviction to give them to children in Haiti. The children brought \$5,660 for school books for children in Haiti.

At Lemon Springs UMC, 17 youth were convicted by the needs of the children in Haiti and began to collect not only change, but paper money and canned food for the hungry children in our community.

They proceeded to get the entire church involved and these same 17 youth led the way with \$1000 for Haiti and 382 cans of food for Christians United Outreach Center (CUOC).

* Roberta Byram is pastor of Lemon Springs UMC in the Sanford District.



Inspired by information about the needs of children in Haiti, Lemon Springs United Methodist Youth, hosted a soup lunch and collected change for school books and uniforms and collected canned goods for the local Christian United Outreach Center.

BIRTH

Gina and George McDougald (Rockingham District: Cool Springs) are the parents of a son, Caleb Joseph, born Feb. 10.

MARRIAGE

Tony Joyner (Fayetteville District: Coats) and Teresa Kubach-Robertson were united in marriage Feb. 26 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Macon, GA.

A LETTER FROM UMCOR

Editor's Note: Since the emergency triggered by a massive, 9.0 magnitude earthquake and the resulting tsunami and nuclear radiation threat in Japan on March 11, United Methodists and other people of goodwill have been anxious to help. Following is an excerpt from a letter by the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, deputy general secretary of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Dear Friends,

I join you in lifting up the people of Japan in prayer during this time of crisis. We grieve with them and stand with them in solidarity.

Once again, I am struck by the extravagant generosity of United Methodists who are supporting UMCOR's efforts to bring healing and hope to Japan.

We have received thousands of phone calls, emails, Facebook posts, and donations from people whose hearts are aching for the people of Japan and who are looking for meaningful ways to respond.

Many churches in our connection are collecting offerings to raise money for UMCOR. I want to share with you how we are responding on your behalf to the great needs.

UMCOR's Response: On Friday, March 11, the General Board of Global Ministries reached out to missionaries and partners in Japan to confirm their safety and ask how we can help. The Wesley Center, affiliated with United Methodist Women, is offering shelter to those who are displaced. UMCOR set up an Advance account for the Pacific Emergency. Once we understood better what the scope of the disaster was, we changed the name to "Japan Emergency" and updated the description (see sidebar above).

We are honoring the request of the Japanese government who has asked that outside groups not come to Japan. UMCOR staff generally does not go into disaster areas as first responders and we are working through trusted partners who have existing networks on the ground in the affected areas.

We have sent an emergency grant to church partner, United Church of Christ in Japan. They are using the funds to distribute food, clean water, clothing, and heating fuel. Local churches are being used as distribution sites to provide basic necessities to survivors.

UMCOR also sent an emergency grant to GlobalMedic, a trusted partner and first responder, to provide medical care, and access to clean

JAPAN EMERGENCY (formerly Pacific Emergency)

Providing emergency relief and long-term recovery support for disaster-affected communities in Asia and Pacific. Advance # 3021317.

UMCOR is working through relief and church partners in Japan to respond to and provide immediate assistance and long-term rehabilitation. With these partners, UMCOR is meeting the most basic humanitarian needs in northern Japan such as providing clean drinking water, food, cooking and eating supplies, clothing, and fuel for heating.

Donate by check through local church, call toll free (800) 554-8583 or donate online at www.givetomission.org.

drinking water, supplies, and food.

We anticipate working with our partners to direct your gifts to earthquake and tsunami survivors in Japan as needs and plans for response are identified. All grant requests go through a rigorous approval process and require a reporting of how the funds are used.

It is important to us that we are good stewards of your gifts. We are always accountable for how UMCOR funds are used. Two independent charity watch groups, Charity Navigator and American Institute of Philanthropy, have affirmed UMCOR's trustworthiness by recognizing us with the highest ratings.

Volunteers: While our hearts may feel that we must do something besides "just" writing a check, please keep in mind John Wesley's appeal to do no harm. The situation in Japan is not conducive to sending volunteers. It is important to allow the well established government organizations to organize the response, particularly while they are in the crucial rescue phase.

Relief Supplies: Many supplies are available in Japan and sending funds directly to our partners supports the local economy while ensuring that they are getting exactly what they need. I am always sad when I visit Haiti and other disaster affected areas and see the unopened boxes of clothes, medicine, and equipment that go unused because well meaning people have misdirected their good will.

A practical example was pointed out to me by a physician in Haiti, who explained that it is important to purchase medicine in the country because the directions for use will be in the native language.

An additional concern is that sending an unsolicited shipment into the disaster area runs the risk of hampering relief efforts, clogging runways, and creating an added burden to the system because there is no efficient way to distribute the shipment. Please consider your local thrift store

for these thoughtful donations.

Kit Ministry: We are fortunate that because of faithful giving throughout the year, the UMCOR depots are well stocked with health kits. Through authorized channels and a coordinated effort with the Japanese authorities, when the time is appropriate, UMCOR is prepared to send thousands of health kits to Japan in response to this emergency.

Because we have a surplus of health kits, our priority is keeping our depots stocked with other kits such as cleaning buckets, layette and

school kits. We welcome your contributions so that we can send them where they are most needed around the world.

I am reminded daily of the suffering of people in places like Cote d'Ivoire, Armenia, and here in the United States where springs storms and flooding are creating new challenges. The relief supplies you lovingly assemble and collect are a blessing to the people who receive them.

Continued prayers: UMCOR is committed to standing with the people of Japan into the recovery phase. We will continue working through our church and relief partners to provide shelter, food, and clean water to survivors of this crisis. Regular updates can be found in the UMCOR Hotline, on our website, and on Facebook.

Please continue to hold the people of Japan in your prayers. I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of love into the world by our United Methodist Church.

Grace and peace,
The Reverend Cynthia Fierro Harvey
Deputy General Secretary, UMCOR

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2011

"Tracing Footsteps from the Past"

An Event for Older Adults
September 26 - 29, 2011
Epworth By The Sea
St. Simons Island, Georgia

*From antebellum mansions to a cotton plantation complex,
historic tabby slave cabins and a lost tribe of Native Americans.*



Take a tour of Kingsley Plantation and Fort George Island Cultural Park...
Jacksonville, Florida

Native Americans feasted here, colonists built a fort, the wealthy vacationed here. Oldest plantation house still standing in Florida, a remarkably intact example of a sea island cotton plantation. View owner's house; kitchen house; barn and remains of 23 slave cabins. Learn of the daily life of an enslaved people and a rich plantation owner. Meet the Mocama: "People of the Sea," the lost tribe.



Tour the colonial capital of the Province of Georgia, later becoming the first state capital of Georgia...Savannah

Tour the Historic District, a National Historic Landmark area. See River Street's 19th century cotton warehouses where sea island cotton was processed. See many of the city's 22 park like squares.



Visit the second oldest continuously inhabited city in the United States...St. Mary's, Georgia

Orange Hall – showcase of antebellum life in the Greek Revival style. United Methodist Church – home of Florida Methodism; Presbyterian Church – oldest building in Georgia in continuous use as a church since it was built in 1808; 3 museums within a 3 block area. City is now home to Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.



Learn of the Plantation Era on St. Simons Island

Tour tabby slave cabins & Lovely Lane Chapel. Learn of the lifestyle on Hamilton Plantation.

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For detailed agenda, call 912-638-8688 or visit our website at [www.epworthbythesea.org](http://www.epworthbythesea.org)

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Annual Conference

June 15-18, Raleigh

Up-to-date information online

In an effort to conserve funds and be good stewards, and to keep the most up-to-date information available, the Annual Conference Planning Committee is asking members to go online, to <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>.

Helpful materials are posted there and may be printed as needed.

Reports to be included in the Pre-Conference publications online must be submitted by May 2. All reports must be submitted in Microsoft Word format and may be emailed to smedlin@nccumc.org.

Please contact the Conference Secretary's Office at 800-849-4433 Ext. 222 with any questions.

Deadlines and details

- ♦ **AC Theme:** The theme for 2011 is "A Future with Hope: Leading to Christ," and the Durham District is serving as host. The working agenda is updated regularly online.
- ♦ **Housing:** An agreement with downtown merchants and hotels could result in the conference receiving \$20,200 (toward the facility rental fee) if 500 hotel rooms are used on one night of AC. The hotels are: Marriott Raleigh City Center, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, and Clarion Hotel State Capital. When calling one of these hotels to make a reservation, ask for The United Methodist Church group rate. Visit <http://nccumc.org/secretary/reserve-your-hotel-room-for-annual-conference/> for details.
- ♦ **Parking:** There are two parking decks adjacent to the Raleigh Convention Center. After paying the daily fee, you can leave and re-enter the parking decks, as needed, on the same day, at no additional cost provided you have your parking ticket. Parking is also available at the hotel. Information about parking and bus routes is at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>.
- ♦ **Resolutions:** The deadline for submitting resolutions to the Conference Secretary's office is April 15. Please submit resolutions to the Conference Secretary via email to smedlin@nccumc.org.
- ♦ **Nominations:** Delegate nomination forms for clergy and laypersons for the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences are on the conference website at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/2012-delegate-nomination-forms/>. Persons interested in placing their name in nomination should read requirements and information on the References site before beginning to complete the appropriate form. Contact the Conference Secretary's office at 800-849-4433, ext. 222 for questions. Forms must be submitted by May 2. General Conference is April 24-May 4, 2012 in Tampa, FL and Jurisdictional Conference is July 18-20, 2012 at Lake Junaluska.
- ♦ **For More Information:** also online is registration information for childcare, a display request form, proposed conference rules, resolutions, service projects, special meals and frequently asked questions.



(L-R) Ferrell Blount, Clara Wade, Tom Chandler, and Mike Bolen

UMF announces retirements of board members, consultant

Two members of the United Methodist Foundation Board of Directors and an investment consultant, representing over 50 years of service, retired at the board's February meeting. Retiring were Tom Chandler, Ferrell Blount, and Mike Bolen.

Chandler has been on the board for 35 years, including 11 years as president. During his tenure, the foundation's assets grew from \$6.1 million in 10 accounts to \$105 million in 820 accounts. He and his wife, Lynn, are members of Front Street UMC in Burlington.

Blount served both as a member elected by the Board of Directors and by the Conference Board of Institutions, as well as an ex-officio member representing CF&A and the Conference Board of Pensions. During his 19 years on the board, assets under management increased by approximately \$65 million. Blount and his wife, Lynda, are members of Bethel UMC.

Bolen, senior vice president of Morgan Stanley-Smith Barney, worked with the board as the foundation's investment management consultant.

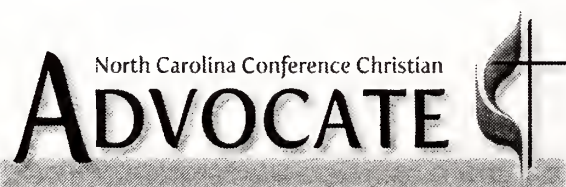
Clara Wade, president of the foundation and member of the board since 1994, recognized the three and presented each with a gift from the board. Wade is a member of Hayes Barton UMC in Raleigh.

letter to the EDITOR

Great Work Bishop Gwinn and Cabinet!

The Ophir/Uwharrie United Methodist Church Charge and UMW greatly appreciate the manual labor you did on the Ryan Epps Home for Children in Haiti. We have made donations to purchase six goats to continue helping the struggling families in Haiti.

Jack Luther, Ophir-Uwharrie Charge, Denton



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

Methodist University welcomes 4th president, Ben Hancock

By Maria Sikoryak-Robins *

When Dr. Ben E. Hancock, Jr. assumed his duties as the fourth president of Methodist University in Fayetteville on March 1, officials at the University utilized social media tools for welcome and introduction.

In an effort to introduce Dr. Hancock to the community, Methodist University launched a welcoming campaign titled "MU World - Our World, Our Networks."

The campaign integrates Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and the "President's Pen" as a way of connecting students, faculty, staff, and alumni with the University's new leader.

"I was so impressed with the hospitality expressed toward me," said Dr. Hancock in his blog entry about his first day at Methodist University. "I also know that this is the same genuine warmth that is shared with all visitors to campus, and has become a hallmark of Methodist University."

Upon the request of the president, the coming months include many "meet and greet" opportunities with students, staff and faculty members, alumni, friends of the University, and community leaders.

While Dr. Hancock officially assumed his new duties March 1, he made his first public appearance in Fayetteville on Thursday, Jan. 20, during a University-sponsored Fayetteville/Cumberland County

Chamber of Commerce Coffee Club meeting.

The University traditionally sponsors the January Coffee Club to kick off the University's annual Loyalty Day campaign for student scholarships.

Methodist University's Board of Trustees Chair Harvey T. Wright II '70, Monarch cheerleaders, and members of the Methodist University Foundation Board of Directors joined Dr. Hancock to launch the annual fund raising campaign.

Dr. Hancock previously served as vice-president for university advancement at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, where he was responsible for overseeing the administrative areas of the Office of University Advancement. He served on the University's Strategic Planning Committee.

In addition to his work at Ball State University, he has served in advancement positions at Albion College, Boise State University, and Maryville College.

A graduate of James Madison University in Virginia, Dr. Hancock holds a Bachelor of Arts in Russian studies and a master's degree in education.

He earned a Ph.D. in comparative and international education from the University of Virginia.



His wife, Debbie, is a special education teacher. Together they have five adult children: Jessie, Sarah, Ben III, Matthew, and Andrew, and two grandchildren.

Stay connected with Dr. Hancock by visiting www.ourmuworld.com or www.methodist.edu.

* Maria Sikoryak-Robins is director of Communications and Publications at Methodist University.

PHOTO: At a meeting in the MU Trustees room, Dr. Ben E. Hancock, Jr. (right) speaks to the group. Hancock assumed his duties as the fourth president of Methodist University in Fayetteville on March 1. To his left is Dr. Delmas Crisp who Hancock promoted to executive vice president and academic dean. Crisp has served as the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Most recently, he served as Interim Executive Vice President from January 1 to February 28 after Dr. M. Elton Hendricks' retirement.

DEATHS

WOMACK, Samuel J. (Fayetteville District: retired) died Feb. 2. The funeral service was held Feb. 6, at Haymount UMC

WHITLEY, Edgar Earl (Elizabeth City district: retired) died Feb. 8. A memorial service was conducted at Virginia Beach UMC in Virginia Beach, VA on Feb. 12.

BIZZELL, Henry Jr. (Fayetteville District: retired), died Feb. 21. The celebration of life was held Feb. 26 at Newton Grove UMC.

LEATHERMAN, Harold (Rockingham District retired), died March 1. The funeral service was held at Lincolnton: First UMC on March 4.

LUPTON, Bernice, widow of Johnny Lupton (New Bern District), died March 2. A graveside service was held March 7 in Sea Level.

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Church Mutual insures more than 10,000 United Methodist churches.



Listening. Learning. Leading®

Alan and Debra Hirsch led Elders' Day Apart and Academy event

By Brian Gentle *

"Recent studies show that 90 percent of people believe in God, admire Jesus and are interested in spirituality. Yet only 40 percent in America have a positive view of the church. In Australia, the church is so marginalized that only 13 percent attend regularly. In Western Europe, aside from baptisms and weddings, the church is largely irrelevant. I used to be in marketing and here is the dilemma for church leaders: We have a great 'product.' But, we have a poor delivery system. Einstein defined insanity as to keep doing the same thing and somehow to expect different results. As church leaders, it is time for us to wake up and realize it is time to change the way we have been doing things!"

These words set the backdrop for Alan and Debra Hirsch's presentation of "ReJesus: Being a Missional Church," at the shared Elders' Day Apart and Academy for Leadership Excellence National Leader Series event held at Edenton Street United Methodist Church, Raleigh, on March 1.

The 300 participants were challenged to recover that apostolic imagination which made early Methodism such a dynamic, spiritual power and influence in pre-Civil War America.

"During the mid-19th century," Alan Hirsch said, "one in three Americans were Methodists. With its circuit riders and its lay-led congregations, Methodism was a mission-driven people movement which engaged its culture in the name of Christ."

Hirsch argued that for Methodists, the recovery of this vision of being a missional church was not just simply to go back to John Wesley, but to Jesus. In fact, this new missional paradigm for spiritual renewal was what might be called the need to "Re-Jesus" the church.

"We have largely lost touch with our loving, wildly passionate, dangerous, radically merciful, and always surprising Redeemer Lord, the Jesus we encounter in the Gospels. For example," Hirsch said, "if we were asked 'did Jesus spend time with the poor?' most of us would answer 'yes.' If we in turn were then asked, 'Do you spend time with the poor?' prob-

ably only two percent of us would say 'yes.' There is for many an almost complete disconnect between our beliefs about Jesus and our actions. This disconnection lies at the nub of the problem facing the church."

"As Christians, we believe Jesus is the revelation of God, and the God Jesus reveals is a missional God. God is mission. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God was not limited to the temple (church). The Kingdom of God was at work often in the strangest of places," Hirsch said.

"Jesus saw the image of God (imago dei) in the least likely people – foreigners, lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, and children. To 'ReJesus' the church means to start seeing others and the world through the eyes of Jesus. It is to say this man, this person, this Jesus is the guide to my life. It is to participate in Christ; it is to live a life that takes the form of direct and unmediated relationship with Jesus. When people visit our churches, the first thing they should sense is that we are 'Jesus people.'"

Later that afternoon, Alan's wife Debra, gave a deeply moving illustration of what it means to "reboot" the church with Jesus.

As a young adult living in Melbourne, like so many her age, she had no time for the church. Moving among a drug culture group, she lived in a community house. One Wednesday evening, a few of her friends came across a white clapboard church and, out of curiosity, decided to go in.

The door was locked, and so they knocked. An elderly, grey-haired man dressed in a dark suit answered and invited them in.

A small group of mostly elderly people were having a prayer meeting and invited them to join them.

Debra and her friends decided to go back on Sunday and, arriving early, sat on the front pews of the sanctuary. When the other church members filed in, they sat toward the back.

But after the service, they came to these visitors and warmly welcomed and greeted them, making them feel as if they were a part of the family.

She said she sensed in these people the presence of Jesus. They were

"Jesus people," and it was through their accepting love that she felt moved to want to follow Jesus.

Her story did not end there. That week, the pastor of the church came to visit their community house where she and her friends and others lived. As she told it, the pastor went straight back to the kitchen and



Alan Hirsch encouraged pastors to spend time outside the church with the poor.



Robert Fairley, pastor of St. George-Piney Grove Charge, center, takes notes during the presentation. About 300 clergy attended the Gathering for Elders to hear Alan and Debra Hirsch at Edenton Street UMC. (Conference photo by Bill Norton)

invited anyone who wanted to join him in a Bible study which focused on the Gospels.

Each week this pastor returned, and the members of this small Bible study group became spiritually transformed into a community of faith – a church.

Under his mentorship, they became disciples of Jesus.

Alan Hirsch stressed that it is the incarnational ministry of Jesus which informs the strategic paradigm shift required for developing missional churches. His was a ministry of proximity.

"The church, however," said Hirsch, "has traded in this incarnational model of ministry for what might be called an 'attractional model' of 'build it and they will come.'"

Great effort is going into building stronger youth groups, starting contemporary worship services, and doing missions. These in themselves

are not wrong, he pointed out.

But such an approach does not engage the lives of a post-modern, post-Christian culture. This attractional paradigm increasingly isolates Christians from those outside the faith.

"Being a missional congregation means we must realign our priorities and recalibrate our approach to doing ministry. Christology determines missiology, and missiology in turn determines ecclesiology," he said.

He pointed out that the person and work of Jesus must directly point the way of doing ministry. "As Jesus spent extended time with those 'outside the temple,' so must we, he said.

For more information about Academy for Leadership Excellence events, visit www.theafle.org or call 919-208-2169.

* Brian Gentle is director of the Academy for Leadership Excellence.

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New collection for worship music, resources *continued from page 1*

Not your mother's hymnal

General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body, authorized development of a new hymnal and worship book for the church in 2008. However, financial constraints forced cancellation of the new publication.

As part of their regular duties to update the church's music and worship resources, the

Publishing House and the Board of Discipleship had started work on a new collection as a follow-up to the worship supplement "The Faith We Sing."

That project, which was less costly than a General Conference-sanctioned hymnal, continued. "Worship & Song" is the result.

Revision of The United Method-

ist Hymnal requires a vote of the General Conference. Supplementary resources such as "Worship & Song" augment the official hymnal and do not require formal denominational approval.

McIntyre of the Board of Discipleship said reaction to the new collection has been enthusiastic so far.

Musicians, liturgists and pastors

alike "recognize its value and potential, both as a supplement to existing resources and worship-music style as well as an important tool in reaching out to younger people and helping the church to speak to the present and future."

He expressed hope that "Worship & Song" will "provide the church with the musical

language, styles and practices to continue to tell and appropriate the timeless truth of the gospel, even in new musical and textual language with theological integrity and faithfulness to our Wesleyan heritage."

Marcia McFee, who helped direct worship at the 2008 General Conference in Dallas, said hymnals and supplements are "the tools of (the worship leader's) trade. The worship-

ping body is the canvas."

Before leading worship, McFee said, she always prays, "Dear Lord, please make something happen in worship today that is not in the bulletin." She expects "Worship & Song" to help those surprises occur more often and more easily.

**Dunlap-Berg is internal content editor for United Methodist Communications.*

"Regardless of our interests and responsibilities in traditional or contemporary worship, and places in between, through song we can invite all to become instant agents of proclamation, peace and acceptance," said Carlton R. Young, editor of The United Methodist Hymnal, composer, and conductor. "Worship & Song is for those who seek a ceasefire in the culture war."

"When we reduce all of our congregational song experience to two camps—contemporary and traditional—we're missing the power of the Holy Spirit and what it's telling us," said C. Michael Hawn, Professor of Church Music and Director of the Master of Sacred Music Program at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas. "And we're only giving people two boxes in which to put things, and then they just ignore everything else. I think the Spirit moves much more broadly than dichotomies, in most all of the aspects of our life."

Disciple Bible Study Outreach will reach prisoners in six states

Mark C. Hicks, executive director of Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, and Gilbert C. Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men (GCUMM), announce plans to train persons to teach Disciple Bible Study in prisons in six states.

DBOM was founded in June 1999 as a collaborative ministry of the NC and Western NC Conferences for the promotion and development of Disciple Bible Study Ministries in local churches and other outreach settings in the state. Hundreds of volunteers are now involved in the North Carolina ministry.

A graduate of the Duke Divinity School, Hicks said he was surprised at how many people are willing to participate in the prison ministry. "They were simply waiting for someone to show them how."

With support from the GCUMM, the ministry is now being introduced to churches in Virginia, Kansas and Tennessee. Training experiences are also being planned in the Baltimore-Washington area and Louisiana for later this year.

Coming events

- ♦ April 6 — Disciple training for North Carolina prison chaplains.
- ♦ April 11 — Disciple training for Virginia prison chaplains.

- ♦ June 13 — Signing a statement of relationship at the Holston Annual Conference session.
- ♦ June 16 — Signing a statement of relationship at the Virginia Annual Conference session.
- ♦ Aug. 27-28 — Training Tennessee church leaders in Disciple and prison ministry.
- ♦ Sept. 10-11 — Training Kansas church leaders in Disciple and prison ministries.
- ♦ Sept. 17-18 — Training Virginia Conference church leaders in Disciple and prison ministries.

In each state, representatives from the conference(s) will incorporate as non-profit 501(c)3 organizations in order to raise funds and relate to the state organizations that regulate the prisons.

All state organizations will be affiliated with the national organization led by Hicks.

Other members of the board are: Bishop Richard B. Wilke, principal author of the Disciple Bible Study series; Bishop Kenneth Carder, professor of the practice of ministry at Duke Divinity School; Ernie Pearson, partner with Nexsen/Pruett Law Firm of Raleigh, N.C.; and Hanke.

For additional information, call the DBOM office at 336-454-5348 or e-mail Mark Hicks at MCHicks@northstate.net.

NCC musician and pastors contribute to "Worship & Song"

"The Worship and Song: for United Methodists, Resources for Worship" contains two prayers and a song written by pastors and a musician in the North Carolina Conference.

Two prayers, No. 17 for Ash Wednesday and No. 71 for the Lenten season, were written by the Rev. Mary Frances McClure, pastor of Trinity UMC: Red Springs.

"A Covenant Prayer" was written by Adam Seate and Jay Locklear. The song is in the "Worship and Song Supplement," No. 3115. It is based on John Wesley's "Covenant Prayer." Seate is pastor of St. Luke UMC: Goldsboro and Locklear is the director of Worship and Technology at St. Luke UMC: Sanford.

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SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom townhouse, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs! Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccumc.org.

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FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska, 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

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PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.



Heading out for a backpacking adventure...where strangers will soon become friends. Backpacking is just one of many outdoor adventures available at the three conference United Methodist camps.

Over 1,000 campers share in experiences at three NCC camps

By Rhonda Parker *

Each summer, United Methodist Camps in the North Carolina Conference welcome over 1000 campers who come to share in a warm welcome, good food, friendship, campfires, stories, worship and songs. Each week of camp forms a community that experiences the love of God through a dedicated staff, well planned activities, and a beautiful outdoor setting.

Camps Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish are fun places to grow. They are places for first-time campers to gain new life experiences and new friendships with campers and staff. They are places for returning campers who come each year to make new friendships and renew old ones. They are places where all campers recreate and reconnect with others, with the created world, and with God. Learn more about United Methodist Camps and the summer camp programs at: www.ncumcamps.org.

* Rhonda Parker is center director at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center.

NCC Receives Community Award

PHOTO RIGHT: The Town of Garner has added a new sign at the entrance to the United Methodist building property. The sign tells anyone approaching the entrance that the building and property is a Community Appearance Award Winner. In an earlier presentation during a Garner Town Council meeting, Conference Treasurer Christine Dodson received a Visual Image Ward plaque for the conference. During the presentation, the conference headquarters was cited for being an "environmentally sustainable design, construction and operations that qualified the site as a LEED-certified project and for richness in detail of the architecture, combined with the wooded setting, make the site a unique addition to the Town of Garner." The building was dedicated in early June 2010, and staff moved into the building shortly after Annual Conference. (Conference Photo by Bill Norton)

around the CONFERENCE



Plymouth UMC - Sanctuary Doors Consecrated

Plymouth United Methodist Church (Elizabeth City district) accepted and consecrated sanctuary doors given by Hope Jones Stanton (left) in honor of her husband, Dr. Allie McLeod Stanton (right), on January 30, 2011. The Rev. Jay Clark serves as the pastor of the church. (Photo by Judy Spruill)



Christmas in New York December 6 - 9, 2011

Fly to NYC and join the 27th Annual Christmas in New York Theater Party. Thrill to the Big Apple for theater, fine dining, and time to explore. Stay at the wonderfully located *Edison Hotel*, see the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, featuring the world famous Rockettes, and enjoy a Broadway show. Space is Limited ~ Register Now.

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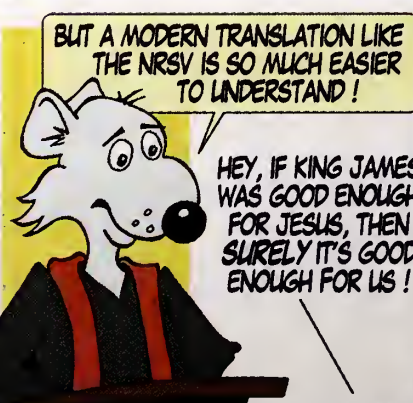
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BUT A MODERN TRANSLATION LIKE THE NRSV IS SO MUCH EASIER TO UNDERSTAND!

HEY, IF KING JAMES WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR JESUS, THEN SURELY IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR US!



THE WHEELS OF CHANGE TURN MORE SLOWLY FOR SOME THAN OTHERS...

OH, AND ANOTHER THING! IF THE 1928 COKESBURY HYMNAL WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR JESUS...

Karl Zorowski

calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Camp Open Houses - April & May

The three NCC camp and retreat centers are holding open houses this spring.

- ♦ The Camp Rockfish Open House will be Sunday, April 17 from 1-7pm. Dinner will be served at 5pm followed by a worship experience. Contact the camp to RSVP if you would like to attend: 910-425-3529 ext 21 or email info@camprockfish.org.
- ♦ Camp Chestnut Ridge has scheduled the Open House for May 1 from 1pm - 5pm. There will be activities for kids aged 6 to 96. The spring open house is an open invitation to church members, friends, neighbors, and anyone interested in what happens at camp. It is free of charge, but donations will be accepted.
- ♦ The Don Lee Open House will be May 15 from 2 - 7:30 p.m. Join others for a day of sailing, swimming, canoeing, and crafts with an all-camp picnic. There is no charge to attend but RSVPs would be appreciated by calling 1-800-535-5475 ext. 22 or e-mailing info@donleecenter.org.

Unity Dialogue meets on April 27

The Unity Dialogue will meet April 27, at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Discussion will focus on an article first printed in 1996 in Christian Century magazine, by Walter Wink, called "Homosexuality and the Bible." Now available online, the article can be found at <http://forusa.org/articlesandresources/wink-homosexuality.html>. Permission to print the article is given at the end of the site. Now in its 12th year, the Unity Dialogue is committed to civil conversation about the challenging topic of homosexuality. The dialogue is open to all. The gathering at Methodist University is at 3 p.m., in the Heritage Room, and following worship with communion, Bishop Al Gwinn will facilitate the discussion. Anyone is welcome to attend the dialogue.

Race of Grace Weekend-April 29-May 1

The Race of Grace Weekend will be held April 29-May 1 to raise money to help neighbors impacted by poverty. Three events will be held: golf, bike tour, and 5K run/walk.

- ♦ The Links of Grace golf event will be held on Friday, April 29, at the Neuse Golf Course in Clayton. There will be an 8:30 a.m. and a 2 p.m. shotgun start. Pre-registration is required.
- ♦ On Saturday, April 30, the Tour de Grace bike event will be held at Louisburg College. There will be 32 and 52 mile rides. Registration is at 8 a.m. and the rides start at 9 a.m.
- ♦ The Race of Grace, the 5K run/walk, will be held on Sunday, May 1. Registration is at 1 p.m. and the race begins at 4 p.m.

For more details on each event and pre-registration, visit <http://raceofgrace.org>. New this year: Form a Couch Potato Relay Team - read more online. In 2004, the event began with the Race of Grace. The Links of Grace began in 2006 and the bike tour in 2007. During the past six years, \$275,000 has been raised for charitable causes.

Change the World - May 14-15

Churches are encouraged to discern ways for participation in the second Change the World event planned for the weekend of May 14-15. This is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service - locally and globally. During the May weekend, United Methodist churches are encouraged to create and participate in a service or fundraising event that helps bring about positive change, whether it's cleaning up school grounds, renovating homes or getting involved in global health issues like malaria.

Churches can take advantage of existing ministries or initiate a new outreach event. For more information, visit the Change the World web page at umcom.org/changetheworld.

Cross-Racial/Cultural Appointments in the Global Church - May 16-18

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) has opened registration for "Facing the Future: Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments in a Global Church," May 16-18 in Los Angeles, Calif. The event features special learning tracks and will bring together experts at all levels of the cross-racial/cross-cultural appointment process to resource and train leaders impacting CR/CC appointments to be effective and create a community for connection and dialogue on issues relating to CR/CC appointments. Registration, \$300, is open March 1-April 15. For information, visit www.gcorr.org/crccevent.

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Native American Ministries Sunday to be observed May 22

Native American Ministries Sunday is one of the six churchwide Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. Native American Ministries Sunday nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians. It is typically celebrated on the third Sunday of Easter, May 8, which is Mother's Day. However, in the North Carolina Conference, Mother's Day is designated for a Retirement Homes offering. Thus, Native American Sunday for the conference has been changed to May 22. Local churches can choose to celebrate it on another Sunday.

Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to develop and strengthen local Native American ministries. In the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the UMC, North Carolina has the largest number of Native American ministries established. Native American Ministries Sunday resources, free for churches, are available online at www.umcgiving.org/nams or can be ordered by phone at 888-346-3862. Items available include offering envelopes, posters, a PowerPoint presentation, video and liturgical resources.

Liberia Mission Team - Register by May 1

As a part of the Love for Liberia missional emphasis, a volunteer-in-mission work team from across the NC Annual Conference will be going to Liberia July 24 - Aug. 5. The work will be multi-varied and will allow participants to have a range of experiences helping the people at Ganta Station in Nimba County, Liberia. The registration deadline is May 1.

Participants will have the opportunity to help Liberian teachers conduct a summer day camp enrichment program for both the junior and senior high divisions. This camp will concentrate on math, English, general science, biology, chemistry, and physics. Plans are to offer teacher training.

Another aspect of the team's work will be medical. The Ganta Hospital will host physicians and nurses who would be willing to donate their time and expertise during this brief period of time. Work team members also will be given the opportunity to work with the Hospital and with Curamericas in several community health projects in their Nehnwanna Project.

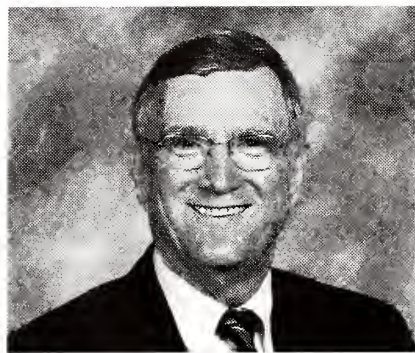
Among these projects is the building of wells and latrines alongside Liberian workers. There will be opportunities to accompany community health teams as they engage in other aspects of community health—including working with prenatal and post-natal women. Other related projects might include teaching medical staff computer skills and data entry.

In addition, an important part of the team work will be formulating relationships with the Liberian people. "We want to discover what it means to be a partner in missions. To do that, we need team members who are flexible and have a willingness to work hard. More than that we need team members with a willing heart who desire to let the Holy Spirit teach them about the sharing of love through word and deed, said Bill Haddock the team coordinator.

The trip will cost about \$3,000 per participant. To be a part of this team, please contact the Reverend Dr. Bill Haddock at 919.772.2042 or by email at revbillh@nccumc.org before the May 1 registration deadline.

Upcoming Events:

- ♦ Disciple Bible Study training - July 16 - First UMC, Rockingham. Registration required via www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or by calling the DBOM office at 336-454-5348.
- ♦ The 2011 Convocation & Pastors' School - Oct. 10-11 at Duke Divinity School. Learn more and register visit, <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/lifelong-learning/cps-2011>.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

May 1, 2011

Text: Philippians 2:1-11

"The Christ Hymn"

Pick at random.

Close your eyes and point in the general direction of this week's study text: Philippians 2:1-11.

The chances are that you will find your finger resting on a powerful, poetic, passionate place.

These eleven verses start with a quiet "if" and mount to the crescendo of every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord.

When one compares various translations of this "Christ hymn," one can see how we struggle to capture the intensity of the New Testament text.

Take, for instance, Philippians 2:1. The word *koinonia* gets rendered in a variety of ways: sharing (NRSV), fellowship (NIV), communion (Alford), brothers (Taylor), common share (Williams), relationship (Berke-

ley Brothers), participation (REB), unites (CEV).

There is more richness here than can be reflected in any one way. It's the difference between a prism and a clear pane of glass!

It is presumptuous to think we can seize the full meaning of a biblical text in one reading.

Each time we return to a reading, there is something fresh and new. The Spirit who first inspired this writing is still at work!

If my understanding of a passage is exactly the same now as it was when I was fifteen, then perhaps I have not re-visited the text frequently enough!

John Indermark, a clergyman in the United Church of Christ, has noted that the phrase "highly exalted" (Philippians 2:9) appears nowhere else in the New Testament.

Only Jesus Christ has been fully obedient. Only Jesus Christ is "highly exalted." That exaltation came not because of success, but because of faithfulness. In our success-driven culture, that is not what I want to hear!

Last winter, a band organized at our congregation was going to play at one of our worship services. One of our members jokingly said, "The band has had a number of requests, but

they have decided to play anyhow!" That is what it is to live with the "mind of Christ" (Philippians 2:5). In the face of this world's pressures, it is to love anyhow. It is to forgive anyhow. It is to be faithful anyhow.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Karl Barth's book *The Epistle to the Philippians* (John Knox Press), Barth writes "And then—where is the boundary here between 'ethics' and 'dogmatics'? There should indeed be none; one is nothing if it is not also the other...Christians can only take their start from that fulfillment (of the law in Christ Jesus)."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy One! Generous God! You have in Christ Jesus lived the life to which we are called. As we honor His name, grant us to honor His obedience with our own faithfulness..."

May 8, 2011

Text: Revelation 4:1-2, 6-11

"Heavenly Worship"

Are you ready for four weeks of the Book of Revelation?

For the rest of this month, we shall be exploring various dimensions of worship as seen in this book of John's visions.

For starters, have you noticed how much singing goes on in John's vision of heaven?

Look at Revelation 4:8, 10; 5:9, 12; 14:3, for example. Ceaseless singing! Singing a new song! (One of my professors said he had a church member who told him that if they had to sing a new song in heaven, she didn't want to go!) Corporate singing!

Most of us break into song when mere speech will not contain the fullness of our emotion, the depth of our feeling, the height of our joy, the shadows of our sorrow, the cloudiness of our mystery.

No wonder John sees this scene in which those who gather at the throne of God break into song!

Unless the Lord has granted everyone the gift of perfect pitch, I suspect that some of the singing at the heavenly throne is done a bit off key!

I don't think that bothers God any more than it does when we offer our off-key sound of praise even now.

Brian Wren, notable contemporary hymn writer, once commented that he loves to slip into a sanctuary and find out that he is seated in front of someone who is singing full volume,

but off-key.

Wren says, "It is the musical equivalent of the widow's mite" (Luke 21:1-4). Jesus was pleased when the widow gave what she could. Maybe off-key singing can be a good gift!

The songs being sung in heaven all seem to be songs of praise and thanksgiving.

While we still walk the bounds of earth, it is expected that we shall sing praise, confession, supplication, teaching, intercession—the full range of the human experience.

In the unfiltered presence of God, all the singing is worship and praise (Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9, 12, 13; 7:12; 11:17; 12:10; 15:3; 19:1, 5, 6).

In Revelation 4:9, part of the description of worship is "thanks." We recognize the New Testament word for "thanks", *eucharistia*, in our community celebration of the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist.

Gathering at the Communion Table is a "foretaste of the glory divine," an anticipation of the coming reign of God, a time to join with the saints in heaven in song.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *American Grace* (Simon and Schuster), Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell report how one priest describes worship through the Communion liturgy: "(Singing hymns) creates a sense of peoplehood and collective action...This is all social stuff—so they're singing as a people, and not singing as individuals."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Then sings my soul, my Savior God..."

May 15, 2011

Text: Revelation 7:9-17

"Thankful Worship"

Do you have a few notions about who is in and who is out when it comes to heaven?

The image painted by John in the Book of Revelation puts an ax to some of our exclusivity.

Look at Revelation 7:9—"multitude that no one could count"—more expansive than we might have imagined. Look at Revelation 7:9—"every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages"—beyond every barrier John could imagine. Look at Revelation 7:11—"all the angels... the elders and the four living creatures"—representing the full created

See "Bible Study," page 11

conference CALENDAR

April

- | | | | |
|------|---|----|--|
| 1-3 | Kaleidoscope, Camp Don Lee | 22 | Good Friday (UMB closed) |
| 1 | Faith Connections on Mental Illness | 24 | Easter |
| 3 | One Great Hour of Sharing | 26 | Conference Committee on Communications mtg., 10 a.m. |
| 4-8 | Full Connection interviews | 29 | Links of Grace, Neuse Golf Course, 8:30 a.m. |
| 4-5 | Faith and Rural Life Conference | 30 | Tour de Grace, Louisburg College, 9:00a.m. |
| 4-7 | SEJ Clergywomens Conference | | |
| 5-7 | Clergy Academy of Christian Witness | | |
| 5 | Holistic Stewardship Workshop, 10 a.m. | | |
| 6 | Leadership Summit Webcast St. James UMC, Greenville | | |
| 7-9 | No Man Left Behind Men's Conference, MERCI Center | | |
| 8-10 | CO+Mission Youth in Mission weekend | | |
| 9 | Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry, Avent Ferry UMC, 9 a.m. | | |
| 15 | Resolutions Due to Conference Secretary | | |
| 16 | Youth Lay Speaker Training, UM Building, 10 a.m. | | |
| 17 | Camp Rockfish Open House, 1:00 p.m. | | |

May

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Chestnut Ridge Open House, 1-5 p.m. |
| 1 | Race of Grace 5K Run/Walk, Edenton St UMC, 4pm |
| 3 | Living as a Servant Leader, 9 a.m. North Ridge Country Club, Raleigh 9 a.m. |
| 8 | Methodist Retirement Home Sunday |
| 9 | Conference Connectional Table meeting |
| 12 | Day of Empowerment for moving pastors only 10 a.m. |
| 15 | Camp Don Lee Open House, 2 p.m. |
| 19-27 | NC Annual Conference Licensing School |
| 22 | Native American Ministries Sunday |

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

May Adult Bible study

order. Perhaps God is a more generous and welcoming God than we have thought.

Do you have a few notions about the kind of earthly riches God gives to the faithful? (If I heard it correctly, Joel Osteen said he was rich because it would insult God to turn down the wealth God wanted to give him.)

Look at Revelation 7:14—"they who have come out of the great ordeal"—not the life of peace and ease that we might think means one has won God's favor.

The word translated "ordeal" can also mean affliction, pressure, tribulation, anguish, burden, persecution, or trouble. That does not seem like a roll call for the so-called "prosperity gospel"!

Do you have a few notions about how we are made ready to be in the full presence of God?

Look at Revelation 7:14—"made (the robes) white in the blood of the Lamb—a cleansing by what Christ Jesus has done. Look at Revelation 7:17—"for the Lamb at the center of the throne"—Christ is central, not even those who have been faithful with much good works.

This morning, I went to my bank to tell them about an e-mail I had received.

My guess was that the e-mail was not from the bank, as it alleged it was, but from someone who was trying to steal my password for my online banking.

Some miscreant wanted to pilfer my identity. (The folks at the bank agreed.)

How does one prove one's identity? In classic theological terms, the devil is trying to steal our identity. The reality of our identity is in the wideness of God's mercy (Revelation 7:9) and in the work of Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:14).

Some students of the Bible think that the reference in Revelation 7:14 to "washing their robes" is a symbol for the waters of baptism in which one puts on the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-5). That's not such a bad way to get an identity!

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Big Book of New American Humor* (Harper Perennial), William Novak and Moshe Waldoks quote Ronnie Shakes who wrote of the mystery of heaven: "I fear that one day I'll meet God; He'll sneeze, and I won't know what to say."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of the mystery, God the Source of our identity, God of our tomorrow..."

May 22, 2011

Text: Revelation 21:1-8
"All Things New"

In the King James Version of the Bible, words translated "new" appear eighty-six times in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the count is fifty-nine. The problem is that there are at least seven Hebrew words that are rendered "new" and six Greek words that become "new" in English. So, when the Bible speaks of something's being "new," which meaning of the word is intended?

This week's text from Revelation speaks of a "new heaven," "a new earth," and "a new Jerusalem."

Revelation 21:5 has the "one seated on the throne" proclaiming "See, I am making all things new."

In these expressions, the word is *kainōs*, a term that describes "freshness."

These are things that are different when contrasted with the old. It is not necessarily new in the sense of never having been before, but new in the sense of being refreshed.

If we believe that the reign of God began to break through in Jesus Christ, then the image of heaven would not be of something never seen before, but of something that is now completed, restored, renewed, refreshed. It is made "new."

For persons in the Wesleyan tradition, this is the week for observing Aldersgate Day, a celebration based on an experience John Wesley had on May 24, 1738.

Mr. Wesley said that he went unwillingly to a meeting on Aldersgate Street; he heard someone reading from a Martin Luther commentary on Romans and Wesley felt his own heart strangely warmed.

In terms of this week's study text, Wesley was refreshed in the faith, made new, made fresh.

The breadth of the promise of Revelation 21:5 is that God is making all things new. This is not just a hint of what is to come; it is a gift for now.

Note that Revelation 21:3 speaks of God's dwelling in the midst of humankind. Note that Revelation 21:1 speaks of a new earth.

What a remarkable word it is! God's good presence is not limited to some day in the sweet by and by. God, in Christ Jesus, has already begun the good work of making all things new. With grace-touched eyes, we see it.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Roger E. Olson (*Arminian Theology*, IVP Academic) has written: "Arminius was a strong believer in prevenient grace as regenerative. That is, for him, prevenient grace is not only

continued from page 10

persuasive; it also renews the person in the image of God..."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Giver of all good gifts, open our hearts to receive the gift of the 'yes' in your new creation..."

May 29, 2011

Text: Revelation 22:1-9
"Tree of Life"

What else is there to be done? The vision of John sees a river that provides the water of life (Revelation 22:1). The vision of John sees a tree that provides food year-around (Revelation 22:2). The vision of John sees leaves that heal the brokenness of all nations (Revelation 22:2). The vision of John sees that all evil has been overcome (Revelation 22:3). The vision of John sees that God's light is more powerful than places of darkness (Revelation 22:5). The vision of John sees that all these images can be trusted (Revelation 22:6). What else is there to be done?

At the funeral of Bishop Marion Edwards, The Reverend Vernon Tyson said that the bishop had received many awards and recognitions during his ministry.

But then, Rev. Tyson said, "As he comes into the presence of the Lord Jesus in heaven, the bishop takes all those awards and recognitions and puts them down at the feet of Jesus, the one to whom they all really belong." Yes!

The only response to the great blessings of God is to worship God, to do as the hymn writer says, "Go spread your trophies at His feet and crown Him Lord of all."

When our worship life revolves around "What did I get out of this service?", we can be fairly sure that we have missed the power of worship as John envisions it.

In fact, when our worship life revolves around us and our worship leaders, we have missed the instruction of the angel: "You must not do that!...Worship God!" (Revelation 22:9).

There are, of course, many claims made upon our worship. Success. Wealth. Power. Position. Beauty. Prestige. Humility. Pleasure. Comfort. Recognition.

That's like calling the roll of how most of us measure life. There's not much wrong with any of these unless they become "the object of our affection." But...

The teaching of the Book of Revelation is clear: it is God and God alone who is to be worshiped, or, as the word literally translates, before whom we fall prostrate. What else is there to be done?

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Marilynne Robinson's novel *Home* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), the central character reflects: "Her father had always said, God does not need our worship. We worship to enlarge our sense of the holy, so that we can feel and know the presence of the Lord, who is with us always."

Prayer:

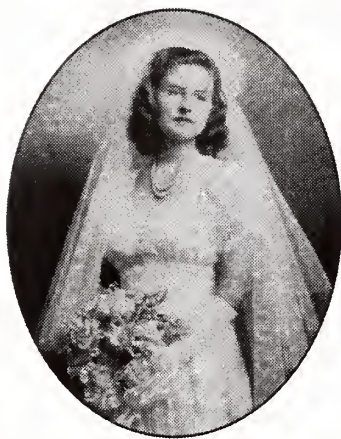
As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "All praise to You, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! All praise to You, O God, Giver of the perfect gift. All praise to You, O God, for the magnetic presence of Your grace..."

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2010 Mother's Day Offering Thanks



Mother of Cheryl Miller

Thanks to the Churches of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church for their 2010 contributions to The Mother's Day Offering. This offering provides **Benevolent Care** to those residents in our communities who can no longer fully pay their way.

Burlington District
\$16,552

Elizabeth City District
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\$3,638

Goldsboro District
\$2,368

Greenville District
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New Bern District
\$2,800

Raleigh District
\$13,241

Rockingham District
\$3,383

Rocky Mount District
\$4,781

Sanford District
\$6,240

Wilmington District
\$4,616

Croasdaile Village
\$13,000

Cypress Glen
\$4,385

Total
\$79,201

What is Benevolent Care?

We consider benevolent care to be a very important component of our mission. Residents who have limited incomes, spend down their assets, and can no longer pay the monthly fees in their residential or health care accommodations are not asked to leave the UMRH system of care; we have a commitment to continue quality, loving care for these persons.

What We are Asking the Pastors to Do

- Offer this opportunity to their congregations
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- Have checks mailed to:
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- P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260-0053
- Visit us online at www.umrh.org

What if you Lose the Materials given to you at your District Pastors Meeting?

Just go to our website at www.umrh.org and you will see an icon on the home page that says **Mother's Day Offering Materials**. You can download new materials there.

TOP TWENTY FIVE CHURCHES that raised generous amounts (over \$500) for this offering.

TOP CHURCHES 2010

1. North Raleigh
2. Saint James
3. Duke Memorial
4. Highland
5. Edenton Street
6. Aldersgate
7. First Cary
8. Browns Chapel
9. Wesley Chapel
10. Jarvis
11. Trinity
12. University - CH
13. First Wilson
14. Duck
15. Wrightsville
16. Saint Andrews
17. Pinehurst
18. Soapstone
19. McMannen
20. Mount Olivet
21. Spring Hill
22. Christ - CH
23. St. Luke
24. Pine Valley
25. Ayden

UMRH 1955-2011

The funds are placed in one account and used as the need arises. Our UMRH Communities are:
Croasdaile Village (Durham) • Cypress Glen (Greenville) • Wesley Pines (Lumberton) •

Gifts are Tax Deductible



The UMRH Foundation



**Volunteers and financial
assistance
needed
after tornadoes
rip across NC**



ABOVE: Much of the eastern half of North Carolina, including the town of Micro (Goldsboro District), was affected by the tornadoes on April 16. (Photos by Bud Budzinski, NCC Disaster Response Team chair and Burlington District representative.)

LEFT: A team of volunteers from the NC Conference works on cleanup efforts in the Sanford District. (Photo by Suzanne Cobb, Sanford District Disaster Response Team Representative)

The North Carolina Conference has activated its disaster response operation at the MERCI Ministry Center in Goldsboro.

Volunteers are needed to help with telephones and coordination efforts across 32 counties impacted by 28 tornadoes that left devastation Saturday, April 16 across the eastern portion of the state.

Volunteer assistance is being coordinated at MERCI by calling 888-400-9167 or by sending an e-mail to tornadoresponse@nccumc.org.

Individuals needing assistance

with storm damage should also use the same telephone number and e-mail address.

Conference disaster response teams are assessing specific needs for early response and later for the recovery phase. "The MERCI team, working with other volunteer agencies across North Carolina, will know what type of assistance is needed in the various areas," said the Rev. Budzinski, chair of the conference disaster response team. "In some cases the need is volunteers, in others it is materials, and often it is financial support that can provide assistance for those who have lost homes."

Financial contributions, designated for NC Storms Emergency Response - Advance #S-00176, can be placed in any NC Conference United Methodist Church offering plate or mailed to NC Conference, P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260. Be sure to note Advance #S-00176. One hundred percent of the contribution will go for storm response.

Churches in the NC Conference are asked to take a special offering as soon as possible on any appropriate Sunday to provide relief in response efforts for storm victims.

Checks should be designated for Advance #S-00176. NC Conference

Bishop Al Gwinn announced that the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has released an emergency grant to the conference that is enabling the move into action for the initial response to needs.

Across the state, at least 24 confirmed deaths, including four children; 130 injuries; and 800 homes were damaged or destroyed. Damage in Wake County alone has been estimated at \$65-100 million.

The National Weather Service reported that 12 supercell thunder-

storms produced at least 28 tornadoes. This was the largest number of tornadoes in the state in 27 years, according to meteorologist Jeff Orrock with the weather service.

Budzinski said volunteers and assistance will be needed for months and maybe years to come.

Editor's Note: The number of tornadoes, deaths, injuries, and homes destroyed were accurate at the time this issue of the Advocate went to press and may change as further reports are made.

Denomination's Leadership Summit tackles church future

By Heather Hahn*

"What is God's vision for The United Methodist Church?"

That question was among several fielded by a panel of three bishops, a young adult leader and agency head at the Leadership Summit in April.

There was a notable pause after the question as the leaders considered how best to respond on behalf of the Almighty.

Finally, Germany's Bishop Rosemarie Wenner took a crack at it. "We took the words of Matthew 28 as the mission of the church, and that really is God's wish for all of us: Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," she said.

Church members hoping to make more disciples gathered at 1,000 sites around the world

See "UMC Summit," page 3

Witness to a miracle at Hillsborough UMC

By Susan Horne *

The congregation at 150-year-old Hillsborough UMC was heartbroken as worship began on Sunday, April 3, 2011. The sun was shining brightly through the large open-shuttered windows, music from the organist and the JOY Bringers filled the sanctuary. The pastor, Al Horne, prayed and preached a message challenging those in attendance to use the difficulties in their lives to glorify God-becoming better instead of bitter. The congregation sang and received Holy Communion. During the worship, God was present, but hearts were heavy. Something was missing. Something was missing.

During the late evening of April 1st - "April Fool's Day", the chancel area of the sanctuary was vandalized. The pulpit that had stood for 150 years had been pushed down over the communion table hitting the altar and kneeling rail. The pulpit, built from strong oak wood, hand forged nails, and master carpenters was in pieces. How many sermons have been preached, how many testimonies have been given, how many scripture readings have been read

from that old pulpit?

After assessing the damage, Rev. Horne realized that the Bible was missing. Searching everywhere, inside and outside of the church, he soon knew - the Bible had been stolen. An enormous sense of loss filled his heart.

The Bible was published in 1856 in England. It was dedicated to the church in October 1861 where it had remained for 150 years. Its pages and cover were worn, but it was irreplaceable. The police came, assessed the situation and said they would turn their report over to their investigators. After the police left, the clean-up and repair work began. At that moment prayer also began. Prayers were lifted up for the person or persons who did the damage and that the pulpit Bible would be found and returned.

The Trustee Chairperson, Drew Blum, and two other church members, Andre DaCosta and Sandy Cates, and the pastor began to put the pulpit, communion table and altar back together with love and care. The evidence of the abuse remains on the old wood, but the pulpit, communion table, and altar railing stand.

The nine o'clock worship service was concluded with the hymn, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." Rev. Horne invited the congregation to join him at the altar to pray for the individuals who had brought destruction to the church and to pray for the return of the cherished Bible. The heaviness in the people's hearts was evident on their faces as they approached the altar to kneel in prayer believing that God is in control and that He answers prayer.

As the last stanza of the song was being sung, a voice could be heard from the back of the church. Everyone began to turn in that direction looking and listening. As the organ continued to play and the congregation sang, a man walked down the aisle of the church carrying the church's Bible - God's holy and living Word. Across the sanctuary, people were saying, "It's the Bible, it's the Bible, Praise God, the Bible." "It's a miracle."



The church family spontaneously erupted in praise and thanksgiving. Everyone- young, old, man, and woman openly wept tears of joy. Some lifted their hands, some clapped, and others spoke words of adoration and praise. God answers prayer.

Rev. Horne met the man at the front of the church, shook his hand, thanked him profusely and held the precious Bible tenderly in his arms. As people continued to watch in awe, he carried the Bible to the chancel area, opened it, and placed it on the

See "Witness to a miracle," page 8



D.Min. in Congregational Growth and Development in NC

The Congregational Growth and Development D.Min. equips ministers to assess ministry contexts, engage in a narrative approach to research in ministry, use a systems approach to leadership, and employ new insights for ministry in the 21st century. Hosted by Matthews UMC near Charlotte. Learn more at www.drew.edu/theo/dmin.

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UMC Leadership Summit tackles future *continued from page 1*

to participate in the Leadership Summit webcast.

In the North Carolina Conference, many pastors and laity gathered at St. James UMC in Greenville for the webcast. They participated in group discussions and were able to submit questions to the panel members.

It was the first chance for many to hear how denominational leaders plan to carry out the recommendations in the Call to Action Steering Team's final report to increase vital congregations.

All five panel members were part of the Call to Action team. The team's report adopted by the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table, states that the status quo of a shrinking and aging U.S. church is "toxic" and unsustainable.

The denomination's "adaptive challenge," the report says, is to "redirect the flow of attention, energy and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations ..."

In short, the panel said, the denomination needs to change how it uses resources and invest more in fostering thriving, disciple-making local congregations.

Illinois Area Bishop Gregory Palmer, a panel member, told the UM News Service the goal of the summit was to build greater understanding of that challenge.

At the event, he saw United Methodists respond with great love for the church.

"People yearn for local congregations to be effective in the mission and to make a difference together in the world," he said. But he added, "Talking about change is both necessary and threatening."

Tough questions

The panel fielded questions about how to promote evangelism, how to bridge racial gaps within the denom-



Charles Mosley, Conference Connectional Table, takes notes on his computer during the discussion portion of the Summit at the NC Conference gathering held at St. James in Greenville. Others around the table to Mosley's left are Linda Harris, back to camera Board of Laity; Joyce Day, blue shirt with back to the camera -Board of Ordained Ministry; Bill Blount, Conference Council on Finance and Administration; Rosanna Panizo-Valladares, 2008 Delegation; Laurie Hays Coffman, 2008 Delegation; John Guard, Board of Laity; and Ed Mann, Board of Laity.

ination and how to measure vitality.

In addition to Wenner and Palmer, the panel included Charlotte (N.C.) Area Bishop Larry Goodpaster, Council of Bishops president, Ben Boruff, a young adult and member of the Connectional Table, and Erin Hawkins, the top executive of the UM Commission on Religion and Race.

Hawkins tackled the question about racial divides. "When we look at the future of The United Methodist Church, it's one that requires us to take a serious look at how we extend ourselves out into the world in a world that doesn't look like the average United Methodist," she said.

She said it is no longer effective to treat racial/ethnic, youth ministry or women's ministries as add-on ministries. "Unless we are willing to make the things we consider special interests the main interest or at least equal interest," she said, "I think we won't find ourselves much further down the road."

Another aspect of diversity is age, and Boruff, 21, spoke to how the

church in the United States has long struggled to draw in more teens and young adults.

"It would be easy for us to say right now that we need to continue the conversation of how to approach young people," Boruff said. "The hard truth is that this is a conversation we've been having for quite some time."

He pointed out that the terms the church uses on Sunday mornings sometimes do not translate well to younger visitors. "We need to do an internal audit of how to best communicate the love of Jesus Christ that we have," Boruff said.

Just statistics?

Church members following along on Twitter at #umclead also had their own sometimes critical take on the event.

One of the concerns on Twitter and among those questioning the panel was the church's reliance on worship-attendance and membership statistics in measuring vitality.

Goodpaster suggested that churches include the involvement and impact of their outreach ministries as part of their "scorecards."

Wenner stressed that counting worshippers is important because that's how a congregation knows that people are joining.

Still, she added, she doesn't consider statistics key to moving the denomination forward.

"It's important to make measurements; however, it's even more important to tell our stories, to share best practices and to learn how other

congregations are reaching out," she said. "It's really the spiritual foundation that will bring us forward, not more bureaucracy and more statistics."

A big conversation

The panelists were gratified by the level of participation in the summit, especially from church members in the central conferences outside the United States. For example, some 300 United Methodists in Zimbabwe gathered at the country's world trade center to watch the webcast.

By the end of the three-hour summit, the panel had received 513 questions — far more than the members had time to address in the

time allowed.

Palmer said church leaders will aggregate the questions and post responses at www.umcleadership-summit.org.

Wenner said she hoped the summit was just the beginning of discussions about how the church can better fulfill God's vision.

"Methodism is a mission movement, and it is all about regaining that spirit," she said. "We are privileged to be part of God's mission in this work."

"It's not about building the church. It is about living as the church of Jesus Christ in sharing the gospel."

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.



Erin Hawkins (left) addresses the summit. Behind her, from left, are Bishops Larry Goodpaster, Rosemarie Wenner and Gregory Palmer. UMNS photos by Mike DuBose.



Annual Conference

June 15-18, Raleigh

Deadlines and details

- ♦ **Agenda:** The working agenda of Annual Conference, June 15-18 and related information about the conference is on the conference secretary's website, <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>. Reports and items requiring a vote will be on the website. To reduce the cost of the conference, printed handouts will not be distributed. Contact the Conference Secretary's Office at 800-849-4433 Ext. 222 with any questions.
- ♦ **Childcare** for children one year up to those who have completed 5th grade will be available during the Conference. Registration deadline is May 30.
- ♦ **Watch Online:** Annual Conference sessions, including worship and ordination services will be available for viewing in "live" during the conference. Anyone wanting to view the conference on the Internet should visit nccumc.org for instructions. The information will be available no later than the morning of Wednesday, June 15.
- ♦ **Clergy portraits:** Olan Mills Studios will be in room 203 Wednesday-Friday, June 15-17 during the Annual Conference to photograph any first-time clergy appointments. All clergy, whether their photograph was taken earlier or they prefer another photograph, are welcome to have a current photo taken.
- ♦ **Wireless access:** Internet access at Annual Conference is available on the conference floor, but there is a charge for using the Raleigh Convention Center network. Free Internet access is available on the front plaza and parts of the front lobby for four hours a day per computer. For more information, visit: <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>.
- ♦ **Housing:** An agreement with downtown merchants and hotels could result in the conference receiving \$20,200 (toward the facility rental fee) if 500 hotel rooms are used on one night of AC. The hotels are: Marriott Raleigh City Center, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, and Clarion Hotel State Capital. When calling one of these hotels to make a reservation, ask for The United Methodist Church group rate. Visit <http://nccumc.org/secretary/reserve-your-hotel-room-for-annual-conference/> for details. Housing at Peace College is also available. See <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/> for more information.
- ♦ **Parking:** There are two parking decks adjacent to the Raleigh Convention Center. After paying the \$7 daily fee, leave and re-enter the parking decks on the same day at no additional cost with the receipt. Parking is also available at the hotel. Information about parking and bus routes is at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>.
- ♦ **Bus Line:** The R-Line, Raleigh's free downtown bus service has pickups every 15 minutes.
- ♦ **Nominations:** Delegate nomination forms for clergy and laypersons for the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences were due by May 2.
- ♦ **Displays:** Anyone desiring a display at Annual Conference should complete the request form available at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference-2011/>.

AC Briefing Session on May 22

An Annual Conference Briefing Session for lay and clergy members will be held Sunday, May 22, 3-5 p.m. The session will be a video presentation that will be streamed online so it can be watched on computers connected to the Internet.

Some districts will have a central location where persons can go and view the presentations. At the publication deadline some districts had selected a site and some decided to not hold a meeting at one location. Check with the district office or nccumc.org for any changes.

- Burlington – Davis Street UMC, 606 East Davis Street, Burlington.
- Durham – UMC Building, 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner
- Greenville – Sharon UMC, 4061 Sharon Church Rd., Kinston
- Raleigh – UMC Building, 700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner
- Rocky Mount – Sandy Cross UMC, 3725 Sandy Cross Road, Nashville, and Weaver's Chapel UMC, 2209 Weavers Chapel Road, Littleton
- Wilmington – Pine Valley UMC, 3788 Shipyard Blvd., Wilmington

Instructions on accessing the stream will be posted on the Conference website, NCCUMC.ORG several days before the event. A test stream should be available before the 3 p.m. start.

The presentation will have two parts. The first part will cover items requiring votes, such as the budget, resolutions, and elections of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

It will also include information on the new electronic voting procedure. The second session will be a live question and answer session with conference officials responding to questions sent by e-mail.

Please contact the Conference Secretary's Office at 800-849-4433 Ext. 222 with any questions.

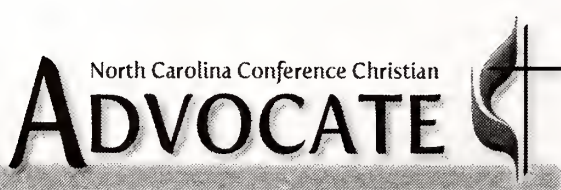
AC speakers and special offerings

Speakers

- ♦ Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, 7:30 p.m., June 15 Worship and 10:45, Memorial Service, June 16
- ♦ Brigadier General William J. (Jay) Gothard, deputy commander general and chief of staff, US Army Reserve Command, Fort Bragg, 4 p.m., June 16
- ♦ Laura Beth Jones, 3 p.m., Leadership Development and 7:30 p.m., Laity Celebration, both on June 17
- ♦ President Timothy Tennent, Asbury Theological Seminary, 9:30 a.m., Ordination and Commissioning and Passing of the Mantle, June 18

Special Offerings:

- ♦ Ryan Epps Home, 7:30 p.m. Opening Worship, June 15
- ♦ Imagine No Malaria, 7:30 p.m. Evening Celebration, June 16
- ♦ Lay Ministries, 7:30 p.m. Laity Celebration, June 17



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Article and Photo Submissions: Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

NC Conference summit brings four groups together for a time of learning and discussion

The 2011 Leadership Summit was held on March 21 at Garner UMC. The summit was a time for learning and discussion between the NC Conference Council on Finance and Administration, Board of Ordained Ministry, Connectional Table and

Ministry Cabinet on the matters most pressing the NC Conference at this time.

Bishop Al Gwinn helped define vital congregations at the beginning of the meeting. He said vital congregations "are spirit-filled, forward-

leaning communities of believers." He explained that "included in their strengths are inviting and inspiring worship, being engaged in mission and outreach, having empowered lay leadership, effective and inspired clergy leadership, and small groups and strong children's programs for youth ministries."

In her presentation, Conference Treasurer Christine Dodson shared some NC Conference realities with the gathering which impact ministry within the Conference.

She pointed out that in 2009 with 813 churches reporting, 409 or 50% had less than 150 members and 604 or 74% had an average worship attendance of less than 100.

"These churches are of importance because of the pressures facing the congregations financially and the declining membership supporting the ministries of the church," Dodson said.

Some of the financial factors most pressing local churches include financial pressures: health insurance costs, local church debt (sometimes rising as fast as health insurance), facility maintenance and operating costs, and clergy compensation costs. She reported that regarding full-time clergy salary changes from 2010-2011, the average change was an increase of 2.3%.

Explaining that further, she said 5% of clergy saw a decrease in salary, 46% had no change in salary, and 49% of full-time clergy saw a salary increase.

Ned Hill, speaking for the Board of Ordained Ministry, said there is a need for effective clergy, including candidates who demonstrate readiness to move to ordination and that clergy should demonstrate evidence of fruitfulness before being commissioned.

Some of the work of the Conference Connectional Table, shared by Emily Innes, included training and equipping leaders at every level of

the church, developing Holistic Stewardship that brings everyone into connection, and fostering healthy congregations that are vital and relevant.

In a presentation about the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, Danny Allen said the council works with resources from local churches as determined by the Annual Conference.

He shared ways that the council is working with the other groups at the Leadership Summit and local congregations to strengthen financial accountability within the conference.

He said CFA views its work not only as financial stewardship but also as evangelism as it supports other ministries in the primary goal of the conference—making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Bill Gattis, speaking for the Cabinet, spoke about growing collaboration with the Board of Ordained Ministry, especially at providing accurate, transparent feedback regarding clergy candidates being supervised by district superintendents and coming before the board for commissioning and Elder's orders.

He pointed out that as the Cabinet enters the appointment-making season, the primary driver in appointment decisions is the local church needs, not simply the personal preferences of clergy.

Gattis also said the Cabinet has been intentional at using Connectional Ministries staff in the use of coaching and consultation with identified churches wanting to pursue congregational renewal and vitality.

Following the presentations, the groups met to discuss ways each work with the goals of the other groups.



Ned Hill (standing at left), chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, leads the discussion. (Photos by Bill Norton)



Gloria Winston Harris, a member of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, participates in the council's table discussion. To Harris' right is Karen Whitaker and to her left is Sheila Ahler.



Bishop Al Gwinn defines vital congregations.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, from all your idols I will cleanse you."
- Ezekiel 36:25

I KNOW IT SAYS 'SPRINKLE' BUT NO, IT DOESN'T PROVE EZEKIEL WAS A METHODIST!

BUT JOHN WAS A BAPTIST, RIGHT?



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Centuries-old debate continues Does Hell Exist?

Hellfire, brimstone and John Wesley

By Heather Hahn *

The debate over hell that has heated up Christian blogs and Facebook pages this spring is almost as old as Christianity itself. And it's a dispute Methodism's founder John Wesley in particular knew well. "Wesley had some of his fiercest, angriest words for any attempt to limit Christ's saving work," said Bishop William H. Willimon of the North Alabama Annual (regional) Conference. "Now obviously, not all those for whom Christ died respond positively to Christ or even know about his saving work. And on that score, Wesley just noted that with sadness. But then what does that mean about their ultimate fate?"

Wesley wrestled with that question in his own ministry, and it still makes headlines today. The Rev. Rob Bell, an evangelical megachurch pastor, has caused a stir with his take on hell in the best-seller "Love Wins." And United Methodist student pastor Chad Holtz received international news coverage when his long Facebook post supporting Bell's book resulted in his departure from a North Carolina congregation (*see story, page 7*).

Both Bell and Holtz dispute the traditional view of hell as a place of eternal torment for billions of condemned souls. As Holtz sees it, God can find a way to bring all the lost into his fold. Generations of Christians are haunted by the paradox: How do you reconcile a loving God with the image of billions of souls consigned to spend eternity separated from God's embrace?

"In the biblical testimony, there is infrequent mention of hell, Gehenna, a place of retribution and a place of fire and torment," said Willimon, who is also the author of "Who Will Be Saved?" "One thing that impresses me is how seldom it is mentioned... There is good reason to say that it is a possibility, but there is no reason to say it is a significant part of following Christ."

The Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church's law book, does not make specific mention of heaven or hell. However, the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which joined with the Methodist Church in 1968, states in its Confession of Faith: "We believe in the resurrection of the dead; the righteous to life eternal and the wicked to endless condemnation." The Confession is part of The United Methodist Church's doctrinal standards in the Book of Discipline. Church doctrine can only be changed through a constitutional amendment process, which requires approval by a two-thirds majority of General Conference and a three-fourths majority of all annual conference members present and voting.

The Rev. Steve Manskar, the director of Wesleyan leadership at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, says United Methodists should teach what Scripture and tradition instruct about hell. "Scripture and tradition teach that hell is real and that it is to be feared," Manskar said. "It also teaches that God's grace is responsible; it is God's free gift of acceptance, forgiveness and healing delivered in the person and work of Jesus Christ."

Ultimately, he said, people who reject God's gift of grace send themselves to hell and eternal separation from God. "We need to always balance God's love with God's righteousness and justice," Manskar said. "God's love, which is a synonym for grace, is not cheap. It is a costly grace. It cost God the Father the life of his Son. God spilled God's own blood in order that the world may be saved."

The debate over who goes to hell stretches back to antiquity, when Christians were still a persecuted minority in the Roman Empire. Origen, a theologian who lived around A.D. 185-254, challenged the idea of eternal punishment.

He taught that hell is real but its fire would serve more to purify sinners than to torment them. Ultimately, Origen argued, God will restore all. Contemporaries charged that Origen's universalism would mean even Satan himself would be saved, and church leaders eventually ruled Origen's ideas heretical. Nevertheless, his ideas had a lasting influence on Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant thought.

In John Wesley's day, the big debate among Protestants took place between two theological schools: the Calvinists and the Arminians. John Calvin, the 16th century reformer, taught that God predestines the elect for salvation and foreordains eternal damnation for others. He emphasized God's sovereignty and foreknowledge. The Arminians take their name from Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch priest who was born around the time Calvin died. Arminius criticized Calvin and his followers for limiting God's salvation. Arminius taught that God gave humans the free will to accept or reject God's love. John Wesley was firmly in the Arminian camp.

By today's standards, some would consider John Wesley a fire-and-brimstone preacher. The same could be said of Wesley's Calvinist contemporaries.

Wesley mentioned hell as a distinct possibility in a number of his sermons, including one titled "Of Hell." But Wesley's main insight into this debate was the concept of prevenient grace, said the Rev. Timothy Tennent, a UM elder and president of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky. Tennent has been writing about Wesleyan teachings in response to Rob Bell's book at his blog.

Wesley taught that God extends grace to people even before they believe in

See "Hellfire, brimstone" page 11

What the Bible says about hell

The Old Testament does not say much about what happens after death. When it does, it usually mentions Sheol, also called The Pit. This subterranean land of the dead is not exactly happy, but it's also not a site of perpetual anguish.

According to Psalm 139, God's presence can be felt even in Sheol.

Instead, "Gehenna" is the word most English-language Bibles translate as "hell." Gehenna appears in the Bible a dozen times — mostly in the Gospel of Matthew. It's clearly the place or state where the wicked are punished. On many of these occasions, Jesus warns his disciples against committing sins that would lead to Gehenna.

Gehenna takes its name from the valley of Hinnom (sometimes called the valley of the sons of Hinnom), an area south and west of Jerusalem notorious for being the place where the unfaithful kings of Judah practiced human sacrifice by fire. An early Christian tradition holds that by Jesus' day the land was used as a smoldering garbage dump. This history probably contributes to Gehenna's fiery image. Revelation also mentions a Lake of Fire where various wrongdoers are cast after the Final Judgment.

Still, the image of hell as a place where God eternally tortures people has more to do with Christian folklore than Scripture, said the Rev. Ted Campbell, author of "Methodist Doctrine: the Essentials." It's hard to know how to interpret descriptions of Gehenna and Revelation's Lake of Fire because no living person knows exactly what the language refers to, he said. "Also, the notion that only a few people will be saved places us in the position of knowing something that, in my view, only God can know," Campbell said.

It's perhaps worth noting that Jesus and Paul both mention salvation far more often than potential punishments in the afterlife.

—Heather Hahn

About the Artwork

TOP: A close-up of the façade of The Cathedral of Orvieto, in central Italy, depicts the torment of the damned in stone in a carving dating back to the late Middle Ages. (UMNS photo by Kathleen Barry)

RIGHT: "The Descent to Hell," by Duccio di Buoninsegna, Panel from the Maesta Altarpiece of Siena, 1308-11.



Facebook post on hell lands pastor in hot water

By Heather Hahn*

A Facebook post questioning the existence of an eternal hell proved to be a point of no return for a United Methodist student pastor and his rural congregation. However, there is more to the story than what has been widely reported about Chad Holtz's departure from Marrow's Chapel UMC in Henderson.

Holtz was reported to have lost his pulpit at Marrow's Chapel after he posted a long Facebook note about losing belief in hell. He later also posted "What I Lost Losing Hell" on his personal blog.

In the post, he discussed how his shift in belief changed him. He also indicated support for a new book by the Rev. Rob Bell, an evangelical megachurch pastor in Grand Rapids, Mich., and critic of the traditional view that hell is a place of eternal torment for condemned souls.

"I think all Christians should at the very least hold out hope that God will not give up on Creation until ALL is reconciled and redeemed—every last sheep—every last prodigal—every last coin," Holtz told UM News Service. "Romans 11:32 declares that God has imprisoned ALL in disobedience so that God may have mercy on all."

The loss of his job sparked a flurry of news reports, but both he and The United Methodist Church's North Carolina Conference say that is not the entire situation.

"While it's true that Holtz is no longer serving as pastor of Marrow's Chapel, he was not fired or dismissed

by the North Carolina Conference," said Bishop Al Gwinn. "Church members asked him to leave and he simply agreed to do so."

Holtz was a fourth-year student at Duke Divinity School from the Holston Annual Conference, which encompasses churches in parts of Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia. Before his controversial post, he had already planned to leave Marrow's Chapel in June after graduation.

In The United Methodist Church, bishops appoint pastors to local churches. Congregations do not have the authority to dismiss appointed pastors. That decision is made at the district and conference level, often in consultation with a congregation's pastor-parish relations committee.

But in his three years at Marrow's Chapel, Holtz sometimes had a fraught relationship with some in the congregation, both he and conference leaders said.

Earlier posts on his blog about homosexuality and displays of patriotism in church had caused tension in his congregation, Holtz said in correspondence with UMNS.

Holtz's pastor-parish relations committee, his local church supporters, advisers and mentors, discussed the concerns over many months, the conference said in a statement.

But Holtz said he and the congregation were content for him to finish his time there. "The 'losing hell' piece was just the final straw, as I understand it," he said.

"Both Chad and the committee agreed that he would not post con-

troversial topics online," said the Rev. Gray Southern, his district superintendent. "He broke the agreement, and the committee members felt betrayed," Southern said.

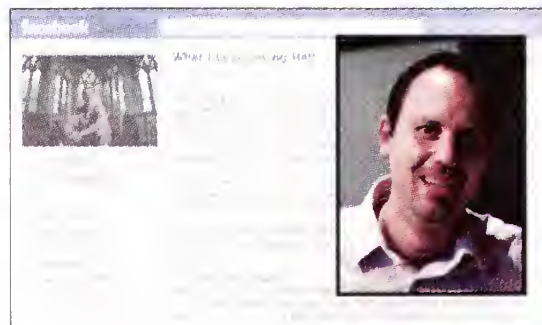
"The committee asked Holtz to leave the church, and he agreed."

Holtz said he knew he no longer could be an effective pastor for the congregation. He also said Southern "has been fantastic in all this."

Holtz believes many people know hell all too well. "When I hear stories of genocide and abuse I think 'hell,'" he said. "When I hear stories of addicts and broken families I think 'hell.' When I hear stories of poverty, slavery, economic policies that pander to those 'in' while ignoring those 'out' I think 'hell,'" he said. He also believes in a Judgment Day, when sin will be named and defeated by God.

"I believe that it will be an awesome and terrible thing to stand before a Holy and Righteous God if we have lived in such a way that has mocked God's image throughout God's creation. That moment may feel like hell—and quite hot," he said. "The question, though, is this: What next? Does God's love and God's desire that all be saved, win? Can God's will trump our own? We often say that we will only get what we want. I hope not. My 'want-meter' is often broken."

A particular belief about heaven or hell is not part of the denomination's baptismal covenant, and therefore is not a requirement for membership in



The United Methodist Church. However, Holtz's status as a pastor puts him in a different category, said the Rev. Taylor Burton-Edwards, director of worship resources at the UM Board of Discipleship. "This is where Chad got himself into trouble," Burton-Edwards said. "He was articulating doctrine that was contrary to the doctrine of this church."

Holtz, a U.S. Navy veteran, remains a United Methodist and bears no ill toward the denomination. Long before this recent controversy, he had decided to take a sabbatical from his church work to focus more on his wife and five children, two of whom were adopted from Ethiopia.

In February, he withdrew from the commissioning process in the Holston Conference, said the Rev. Dan Taylor, the conference secretary and director of clergy services. But Holtz could choose to re-enter that process again at a later date.

"I am a Methodist," Holtz said. "I love the UMC. I feel called to plant a church one day, when the time is right to return to parish life. If that is with the UMC (i.e., — they still want me), then I would be thrilled. If not, then apparently God has something else in mind."

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

Used with care, Facebook can be an effective ministry outreach tool

By Bill Norton *

Facebook and other social media can be effective tools in ministry but they should be used with caution said several conference pastors in a recent e-mail survey.

The responding pastors range in pastoral experience from five to 32 years and serve in churches with average worship attendance from 62 to 400.

"Facebook is integral to our communication in the congregation and in the community," said Mary Frances McClure at Trinity UMC in Red Springs. While using it to communicate news and updates, invitations and event details and to post photos of previous events, McClure said it is an evangelistic tool as well.

"We are able to share who we are as a community of faith with people who may be searching for answers about God or for a church home." It is also used to "connect people who consider Trinity their home church but live in other places." However,

she offers a caution. "We have to be careful to keep our personal opinions to ourselves if they fall outside United Methodist tradition and doctrine. Facebook is not

an appropriate venue to argue with church teaching." She also feels it is not a place to "announce something you don't share face-to-face with your congregation."

"I use social media to reach outside our church to inform the community, to reach inside our church to make sure everyone knows what exciting things are going on, and to publish ideas that have eventually been published in journals and magazines," said Marty Cauley at St. Paul UMC, Rocky Mount.

"The key is that everything you put on the web is public, published, and permanent," he said citing cautions when using social media.

"You should never put anything on the web or in an e-mail that you are not willing to say in person or that slanders another person or organization. As a leader you are accountable for whatever you publish. This doesn't mean that you can't publish things that are tough, but you better have the ability to back it up," Cauley said.

Social media and how it is used is not constant.

For ministry to grow, new ways of using changing technology are needed.

"We found that most of our youth no longer check their e-mail on a regular basis, but almost all of them check Facebook at least a few times a day," said Matt Evans at Greater Heights UMC in Clayton, one of the conference's youngest congregations. The average age at Greater Heights is 28.

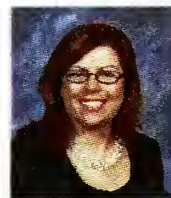
During one of his first worship services, Evans said he was surprised to see teenagers on the front row texting during his sermon. "When I got home, I saw they were posting some of their favorite lines from the sermon that Sunday."

He points out that there are positives and negatives with the use of social media. "If someone loves worship they can tell everyone, but if they don't they could still tell everyone," he said.

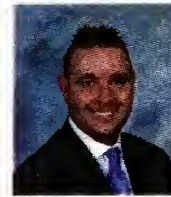
See "Facebook," page 8



Alan Swartz



Mary Frances McClure



Matt Evans



Marty Cauley



Charles Michael Smith, right, is presented the Distinguished Service Award by the North Carolina Council of Churches. Making the presentation is Joe Mann, a member of the governing board, a former award recipient, and a long-time friend of Smith. (Photo by Derek Leek)

Smith receives service award from NC Council of Churches

The Rev. Charles Michael Smith, a retired elder in the NC Conference, has been presented the Distinguished Service Award by the North Carolina Council of Churches.

The honor recognized Smith's commitment to the Council's twin goals of social justice and ecumenism.

Smith served on the Council's Executive Board chairing its Personnel Committee from 1994 to 2010. He retired in 2008 as executive director of Connec-tional Ministries for the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. He was a trustee and member of the denomination's General Board of Church & Society. Smith currently serves as pastor-in-residence at Duke University Divinity School and is Trustee Emeritus at Duke University where he served on the Board from 1998 to 2010.

"In chairing the Personnel Committee, Charles played an instrumental role in the work of the Council as most of those currently on our staff were hired under his leadership. The continuing success of their work is a reflection on him," said George Reed, the Council's Executive Director. "At the same time, he served as faithful advocate on the Council's behalf to the Methodist Conference and has been a continuing connection in our relationship with Duke University. His service has been invaluable."

Past recipients of the Distinguished Service Award include: Jimmy Creech, Jack Crum, Julia Elsee, Robert Estill, Jim Ferree, Bill Finlator, David Forbes, Mildred Fry, Joseph Gossman, Belton Joyner, George Kloster, Collins Kilburn, Evelyn Mattern, Tibbie Roberts, Janie Speaks, and Vernon Tyson.

Smith received the award at the Council's Legislative Seminar early in April.

The North Carolina Council of Churches is a statewide organization representing 18 Christian denominations and committed to the twin goals of ecumenism and social justice. More than 1.5 million North Carolinians are members of congregations under the Council's umbrella.

around the CONFERENCE



Greater Heights UMC - Confirmation Trip

Greater Heights UMC in Clayton, one of the new church starts in the conference that launched worship in Nov. 2007, now has approximately 245 in worship. To help youth at the church understand where they came from and who they are, the confirmands their chaperones, and their pastor, the Rev. Matt Evans, recently visited Lovely Lane UMC, Old Otterbein, and the "Bishop's Plot" in Mt. Ollivette Cemetery in Baltimore.

Witness to a miracle *from page 2*

scarred and worn pulpit. The impact of what was witnessed hit each of person present again as more tears fell and more praise was lifted. The music faded, and the church became very still and very quiet.

"We prayed and God answered our prayer, today we have witnessed a miracle. Thanks be to God. Go now and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Give testimony to the miracle that you have seen here today," Rev. Horne said.

What a day. What a miracle. What a God. God is good all the time, and all the time God is good. Praise God.

The people who witnessed this miracle and the entire congregation will never forget that day. It will become a profound reminder that God's word will not return unto Him void, but it will accomplish what He desires, that God's word is living and sharper than a two-edged sword, that His word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

As the congregation rejoices over the return of the old pulpit Bible, they will not forget to pray that God's word will come into the hearts of the ones who came to destroy. God changes hearts for He changed those in worship on April 1.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

** Susan Horne is a member of Hillsborough UMC. Her husband, Al Horne, is pastor of Hillsborough UMC.*

Facebook can be an effective ministry tool *from page 7*

Another concern with things posted on Facebook is that members expect the pastor to know everything they post. Evans explained that one of his members posted information about a death in their family on Facebook. The member was hurt

that the pastor did not know about it, thinking that if it was posted he would read it.

In an older congregation in Clayton with 400 in workshop, Alan Swartz at Horne Memorial UMC, said his church has a Facebook page for the UMM, UMYF, and UMW. "The women's circle do almost all of their scheduling and planning through the Facebook page.

"On my Facebook page I will include links to news articles that may cover controversial subjects but I am careful to not use it as a plat-

form for addressing those subjects," Swartz said.

"Facebook is a great way to make positive contacts with people" added Swartz using the example of congratulating some after posting some accomplishment on their page but "it is a terrible platform for dealing with controversy."

"My blog posts tend to relate to interpretation of Biblical passages. "I do not allow anonymous comments on the site," he said, "I may challenge people, but always in a way that would be seen as supportive."

Matt Evans said there was a shooting at a party where some of Greater Height's youth were present. The youth were posting comments like "running for my life now while being shot at" and "hiding in the bathroom while trying to escape someone with a gun."

"Family and friends from all over the world were able to communicate words of comfort to the youth making the posts," he said.

** Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.*

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calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Camps hold Open Houses and 5K

Three fun days are coming in May. First is the Camp Chestnut Ridge Open House Sunday, May 1 from 1-5pm. Then, on Saturday, May 14, visit Camp Rockfish for the first annual 5K Adventure Run supporting scholarships and camp needs. Registration opens at 9am; race at 11:00am. On Sunday, May 15, visit Camp Don Lee for their annual Open House from 2-7:30pm. For details, visit ncumcamps.org.

Not too late to recognize One Great Hour of Sharing for UMCOR

Although the official date has passed, churches are encouraged to lift up the One Great Hour of Sharing offering which assures that UMCOR is able to readily respond to disaster and needs around the world. Churches' support means that gifts made to specific UMCOR projects can be spent on that project—not on administrative costs. Please remit OGHS offerings to the Conference Treasurer's Office on the monthly remittance report.

Change the World - May 14-15

Churches are encouraged to discern ways for participation in the second Change the World event planned for the weekend of May 14-15. This is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service - locally and globally. During the May weekend, United Methodist churches are encouraged to create and participate in a service or fundraising event that helps bring about positive change, whether it's cleaning up school grounds, renovating homes or getting involved in global health issues like malaria. Churches can take advantage of existing ministries or initiate a new outreach event. For more information, visit the Change the World web page at UMCommunications.org/changetheworld.

Native American Ministries Sunday to be observed May 22

Native American Ministries Sunday is one of the six churchwide Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. Native American Ministries Sunday nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians. It is typically celebrated on the third Sunday of Easter, May 8, which is Mother's Day. However, in the North Carolina Conference, Mother's Day is designated for a Retirement Homes offering. Thus, Native American Sunday for the conference has been changed to May 22. Local churches can choose to celebrate it on another Sunday.

Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to develop and strengthen local Native American ministries. In the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the UMC, North Carolina has the largest number of Native American ministries established. Native American Ministries Sunday resources, free for churches, are available online at www.umcsgiving.org/nams or can be ordered by phone at 888-346-3862. Items available include offering envelopes, posters, a PowerPoint presentation, video and liturgical resources.

Young Clergy Women Project Conference - Aug. 8-11

Rest and renewal, refreshment and re-connecting with God: souls are made for times like these. This conference is made for these things too. The 2011 Young Clergy Women Project Conference, presented in conjunction with Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School, is an opportunity for summer Sabbath. Join with other young clergy women (under 40-yrs old) from various denominations for worship and play, prayer and reflection as we explore our spiritual health. This time will be led by the Reverend Winnie Varghese, a leader in the Episcopal Church's clergy wellness program. Visit <http://young-clergywomen.typepad.com/conference/> for more information and to register. The registration deadline is June 30. Contact the Rev. Christi O. Brown for more information at cobrown@div.duke.edu.

Disciple Study training - July 16

First UMC in Rockingham is hosting a Disciple Bible Study training on July 16. The event will begin with registration at 8:30 AM and will conclude by 4:00 PM. Training will be provided in DISCIPLE I-IV and DBOM's youth study, RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP. Registration is \$25. This fee includes the training, all associated training materials, lunch and refreshments. Registration required via www.disciplebibleoutreach.org or call the DBOM office at 336-454-5348.

General Conference petitions being accepted through Sept. 27

Petitions for consideration by the 2012 General Conference may be submitted to the Petitions Secretary now through September 27, 2011. According to church law, "Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference..." Detailed instructions for submitting a petition and more information about the process are available on the General Conference website at www.gc2012.umc.org.

Convocation & Pastors' School - Oct. 10-11

The 2011 Convocation & Pastors' School - Oct. 10-11 at Duke Divinity School. Learn more and register visit, <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/lifelong-learning/cps-2011>.

Lake Junaluska Peace Conference focuses on poverty - Nov. 13-15

The 2011 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, "Poverty, Abundance, and Peace" features Senator and former presidential candidate George McGovern; David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; and Bishop Nkula Ntambo of the Katanga Conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The conference will be held Nov. 13-15. This year, the conference will focus on seeking economic justice for all of God's children. The Conference will also feature an interfaith panel featuring Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars on the topic, "Our Sacred Texts Speak to Us in Regard to Peace, Justice and Economics." Scholarships available for full-time college and seminary students. For information on the Peace Conference and to register, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.

conference CALENDAR

May

- 1 Camp Chestnut Ridge Open House, 1-5 p.m.
- 1 Race of Grace 5K Run/Walk, Edenton St UMC, 4pm
- 3 Living as a Servant Leader, 9 a.m. North Ridge Country Club, Raleigh 9 a.m.
- 8 Methodist Retirement Home Sunday
- 9 NCC Connectional Table meeting
- 12 Day of Empowerment for moving pastors only 10 a.m.
- 14 Camp Rockfish 5K Adventure Run; registration 9am, race 11am.

15 Camp Don Lee Open House, 2-7:30p.m.

17 The Rural Church as a Catalyst for Community Transformation, Holly Springs UMC: Holly Springs, NC 4:40 - 8:30 p.m.

19-27 NCC Licensing School

22 Native American Ministries Sunday

June

15 - 18 Annual Conference

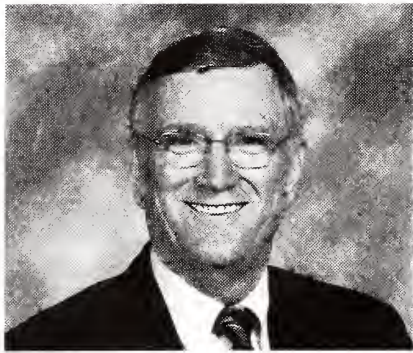
19 Peace with Justice Sunday

20 - 25 Summer Breakaway

22 - 24 Celebrating Charles Wesley and Frank Baker; Duke Divinity School

25 - July 2 Appalachian Trail Hike

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

June *adult* BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

June 5, 2011

Text: Joshua 1:1-6; 11:16-19, 21-23
"God's Promises Fulfilled"

Farewell, Moses. Hello, Joshua. This week's lesson unfolds those early days after Moses died (Joshua 1:1-2). These verses (chapter 11) seem like triumphalism at its best (worst)?

By the time one gets to chapter twelve of Joshua, there is a list of thirty-one kings who have been defeated by the Israelites.

(Side trip: look at Joshua 12:9-24—quickly now: how many of those places can you pronounce at first look?) Joshua's armies have conquered 31 territories. Not bad for a man who was a successor to the great Moses!

Being a successor to a great leader is difficult. But Moses had prepared Joshua for this moment. He instructed Joshua (Joshua 11:15). Moses taught Joshua what the Lord had taught Moses (Joshua 11:15). Moses set an example for Joshua (Joshua 8:30). Moses led Joshua to follow the law of God (Joshua 1:7-8).

Moses left an inheritance for Joshua (Joshua 1:15).

Few of us see ourselves as great, definitive leaders in the community of faith. But each of us will have successors. We shall not be here forever, but others will follow us.

Whether or not we intend to show others the way of the Lord, we do so. Sometimes, the picture we give of what it is to follow the Lord is clear. Sometimes, the image we give of following the Lord is fuzzy.

Sadly, sometimes, the message we give is that "following the Lord does not make much difference in life." Sadly, sometimes, the example we set is that "what happens on Sunday does not have anything to do with how I behave on Monday."

When we are gone, what will those who have seen us have learned about the faith? Can we return to Moses as a model for preparing a successor?

The constant in the transition from Moses to Joshua was the faithfulness of God (Joshua 1:3, 5, 9).

When our lives point toward the promises of God, we are pointing toward truth. Somewhere along the way, I heard someone—was it Howard Grimes? Ross Snyder?—use the term "guarantor figure" to describe someone whose life said "Following Jesus is for real."

Perhaps there is no better way for us to prepare those who come after us than to live a life that guarantees

that the promises of God are true.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In "A Sermon on Preparing to Die" Martin Luther wrote, "...We must also take leave spiritually. That is, we must cheerfully and sincerely forgive, for God's sake, all...who have offended us. At the same time, we must also, for God's sake, earnestly seek the forgiveness of all the people whom we undoubtedly have greatly offended by setting them a bad example or by bestowing too few of the kindnesses demanded by the law of Christian... love." (Timothy Lull, ed., *Martin Luther's Basis Theological Writings*, Fortress Press.)

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "O God of true promises..."

June 12, 2011

Text: Joshua 1:7-16
"God Has Expectations"

The opening chapter of the Book of Joshua begins with God's instruction to Joshua (Joshua 1:1-9). The next portion of the chapter gives Joshua's commands to the officers of the tribes of Israel (Joshua 1:7-15). The final section of this first chapter is the response of the officers to Joshua's order (Joshua 1:16-18).

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SWANSBORO UNITED METHODIST Church is seeking a full-time Director of Education and Youth Ministries to lead and support our vibrant educational program. SUMC is a regional congregation of 1000 members located on the beautiful Crystal Coast of North Carolina. We seek an energetic, outgoing person of faith to work with people of all ages, especially young people and their leaders. Requirements: undergraduate degree, preferable in Christian Education, Youth Ministry or

equivalent; volunteer or paid experience with children and/or youth in a church setting; and an understanding of the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church. For more information or to submit a resume to: bcarey5@ec.rr.com. B. Carey (910) 548-4818.

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PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.

BIRTH

Charles Grayson Pullins, son of Chad (Fayetteville District: Crossroads) and Amanda Pullins, was born April 8.

MARRIAGE

David Malcolm (Sanford District: Ext. Min, U.S. Army Chaplain) and Gina Lisa Andrews were married April 9, in Butler Chapel on the campus of Campbell University in Buies Creek.

DEATHS

BLANCHARD, George F., (Fayetteville: retired), died March 16. Services were held March 20 in Fayetteville.

SPARROW, Dorothy, widow of Leon Ray Sparrow died March 30 at her home. Per her wishes, there was no service.

See "Bible Study," page 11

June Adult Bible study *continued from page 10*

United Methodist annual conferences are meeting.

I am writing this well in advance of my own annual conference session, but I can already make an educated guess at the things that will try to tear us apart, that will become instruments of injury more than tools of clarity.

The echo from this week's study text calls us to the strength and courage (Joshua 1:7, 9, 18) that comes from a united community that is aware of God's promised and realized presence. That unity is not a matter of agreement; it is a matter of having been accepted by God.

Do you suppose it is God, not us, who forms the Christian family?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Walter Brueggemann (*Out of Babylon*, Abingdon Press) has said: "I do not need to write much about accommodation in the U.S. church because we already specialize in capitulating and selling out to the dominant culture. Much of the church understands itself as a 'voluntary association,' a notion that brings with it little spine for resistance."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of Moses, God of Joshua, God of this day, move us to be an obedient community..."

June 19, 2011

Text: Joshua 2:3-9, 15-16, 22-24
"God Protects"

There are a number of interesting dimensions to this week's text (and the verses around it): spies, prostitution, falsehoods, hospitality, bargaining, and the victory of God's people.

Ordinarily, we like spies if they are on our side and reject them if we are the ones being spied upon. Joshua 2:1 reports that Joshua sends these two men to Jericho to scout out the enemy land. We don't like having someone spying on us. *Why is it right for us to spy on others but not for them to spy on us?*

Ordinarily, we consider prostitutes either to be immoral or to be trapped victims. Joshua 2:1 calls Rahab a prostitute (although some translations soften it a bit by saying she was an innkeeper). She is the heroine of this story. *How do we deal with the reality of immoral people doing good things?*

Ordinarily, we insist that telling lies is a sign of moral failure. We teach our children "Always tell the truth." Joshua 2:4 is an account of a boldface lie that seems to get God's favor. *Is it possible that sometimes God wants us to tell falsehoods?*

Ordinarily, we think of hospitality as a good thing. We want our congregations to be people and places of welcome. Joshua 2:3-4 tells about Rahab's selective hospitality. She takes care of the spies and turns away the king's representatives. *Does God want us to pick and choose to whom we shall show hospitality?*

Ordinarily, we are a little suspicious of people who are always trying to dish and deal in an effort to get the best for themselves. Joshua 2:12-13 reveals Rahab's negotiation to make sure she gets something in return for her act of kindness. *Is our generous and caring behavior made less wholesome when we get something in return for kindness?*

Ordinarily, we celebrate the victory of God's people. Joshua 2:24 indicates that because of the triumph of God's people, all the inhabitants of the soon-to-be-defeated lands will dissolve in terror. *Would God prefer that some of God's children smirk in victory while others live in fright?*

John Wesley called for "plain truth for plain people." *What do we do when it is not so plain?*

What Someone Else Has Said:

Charles Wesley (No. 595, *United Methodist Hymnal*) wrote: "Unmixed with faith, the Scripture gives no comfort, life, or light to see..."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Holy Spirit, open the Word..."

June 26, 2011

Text: Joshua 6:2-3, 4, 12-20
"God Is Victorious"

Next month, I shall be teaching again in the Duke Divinity School Summer Course of Study. The students are almost entirely second career men and women, pastors who have just begun work as licensed clergy. Over and over again, these persons tell their story: "God called me to be a pastor years and years ago, but I ran from the call. I did not think God really meant to use the likes of me."

Have you ever hesitated to do something that seemed to be God's will?

Sometimes, it is because we think we shall look foolish. Sometimes, it is because we lack an inner strength to try something new. Sometimes, it is because we want "just a little more" clarity in what it is God wants us to do.

These verses in Joshua give an account of a time when God asked Joshua to do something really ridiculous. What kind of military strategy is this? Walk silently around the walls of Jericho once a day for six days and

then on the seventh day, do it again and add a big shout. What kind of tactics is this for conquering a fortified, walled city?

Joshua does not hesitate. As strange as these directions seem, he immediately summoned the priests, the people, and armed soldiers (Joshua 6:6-7). And God rewards this faithful obedience. The walls of Jericho "come a-tumbling down."

God may call us to love people that others do not love. God may call us to seek justice even in the face of power. God may call us to rethink some attitude that we have always assumed was right. God may call us to let go of some place of security in order to be flexibly available for service. God may call us to walk around a walled city.

There is hidden in these verses from Joshua a hint as to why they

were willing to undertake this seemingly foolish venture. Joshua 6:4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13 all mention it. The ark! The ark of the covenant! The ark that gave a sign of God's presence! Assured that God was with them, they began the walk around Jericho.

Assured that God is with you, what will you be doing?

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Loving God* (Zondervan Publishing House), Charles Colson wrote this: "It has always been this way: God calling His people to obedience and giving them at best a glimpse of the outcome of their effort."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Yes, Lord, I hear You..."

Hellfire, brimstone *from page 6*

Christ. That grace enables people to engage their God-given free will to choose salvation. While Wesley rejected universalism, there are United Methodists who regard themselves as universalists.

The Rev. Kalen Fristad, a United Methodist pastor in Iowa, leads *Destined for Salvation Ministries*. He has traveled the United States sharing his view of Christian universalism. "We all have free will and exercise it every day," Fristad said. "But we do not have total freedom when it comes to the issue of where we will spend eternity. If people were able to resist salvation forever that would mean they are more powerful than God, who wills that everyone be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)."

The Rev. Ted A. Campbell, associate professor of church history at United Methodist-affiliated Southern Methodist University, does not see universalism as quite so benevolent. "It implies that in the end, whether you really love God or not, God will force you to love God," said Campbell, author of *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*.

"That doesn't seem either kind or just to me, but if you allow even the possibility that someone can finally reject God—and I think we do have to allow that possibility—then one way or another, you've got a hell."

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

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UM Women's Division and Global Ministries move toward a new structure, relationship

By Melissa Hinnen *

The chief executive of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries has no doubts that his agency and United Methodist Women will remain "missionally connected" if a proposal for a structural separation is finalized.

Thomas Kemper spoke to the issue April 11 during the semi-annual meeting of Global Ministries' directors following the presentation of an action for separation taken the day before by directors of the current Women's Division, the corporate arm of United Methodist Women (UMW). The board met on April 11-13 in Stamford, Conn.

"I am confident that this new relationship would strengthen the mission of our global Church. United Methodist Women has always been a vital part of the mission connection," Kemper said. "We will continue to be intentional partners as we work together in pursuit of God's mission in the world."

The proposal to separate will make its way through the United Methodist system to the 2012 General Conference, the denomination's policy-making legislature, for final consideration and approval. It could not go into effect until 2013.

Connected in Mission

The action for separation was presented by the president of the Women's Division, Inelda González. Her comments make clear that structural separation does not mean abandonment of collaborative mission work with Global Ministries.

Harriett Jane Olson, the division's top executive, said that the plan envisioned "will strengthen United Methodist Women's identification with our shared work and will enhance our strong witness in the church and the world."

There are large areas of synergy between the operations. With the new structure, these would be strengthened through specific strategies.

Global Ministries and UMW staff would continue to share information through round tables and cross functional teams, deepening collaboration on ministries with related missions. It is anticipated that Global Ministries will continue to provide support with the processing of regional missionaries.

The connection with the Church Center for United Nations (CCUN) will continue to serve as link to the UN and NGO community. Two Global

Ministries' staff persons would serve on UMW's editorial board with a special focus on resources for mission education.

Staff from both organizations would create and distribute an annual mission Prayer Calendar that represents the mission work of the whole Church.

In addition, Global Ministries would help promote and assign staff to teach at the UMW's Schools of Christian Mission.

"This missional network will continue to be an important part of our relationship," said Kemper. "We

have existing examples of strong collaboration, such as happened following the recent earthquake in Japan. There is similar cooperation in Haiti and other places where we minister with the poor and with vulnerable people around the world."

As a separate entity, the organization would become "United Methodist Women, Inc." The term "Women's Division" would be discontinued.

Kemper said that UMW "plays a major role in mission education within the church and keeps the United Methodist connection alert to the needs of justice and equality

in both church and society. These contributions will continue in our shared mission in the world."

Global Ministries seeks, on behalf of The United Methodist Church, to embody the Christian and Wesleyan conviction that all of life is within the promise of the saving, judging reign of God.

Global Ministries has personnel, projects, and mission partners in 136 countries.

* Melissa Hinnen is the information officer of the UM General Board of Global Ministries.



Participants in the Man in the Mirror training were inducted into The Fellowship of the Red Bandanna. The fellowship was established in honor of a man in the World Trade Center South Tower who wore a red bandanna and led many people in the tower to safety.

92 complete No Man Left Behind training

Ninety-two men participated in the No Man Left Behind event held April 7-9 at MERCI.

During the event, participants were taught the principles, practices, components and tools for beginning or strengthening men's ministry in the local church.

With the additional 92 men, there currently are 240 men trained through No Man Left Behind in the NC Conference, said Tom Starnes, conference president of United Methodist Men.

Near the end of the training event, participants were invited to be a part of The Fellowship of the Red Bandanna. They accepted. Membership is offered to men and women who are willing to train, serve, and make a sacrifice to engage men with an offer of Christ and the resources to grow.

The fellowship is named in honor of Welles Crowther who became known as the man in the red bandanna following the fall of the World Trade Center South Tower. Survivors, in news reports, said they did not know the name of the mysterious young man who came through the smoke to lead them to safety. He was quoted as saying as he approached people in the tower, "Follow me. I know the way out. I will lead you to safety."

He carried one woman down 15 flights of stairs—on his back, while leading others to safety, survivors said. His

body was found alongside firefighters in a makeshift command center in the South Tower lobby buried under 110 stories of rubble.



David Delk, co-author of No Man Left Behind and president of Man in the Mirror was one of the teachers during the training session.

Tornado damage cleanup almost done, rebuilding yet to start



UMCOR's Tom Hazelwood Visits NC Conference

PHOTO LEFT: Cliff Harvell (left), Greenville District Disaster Response coordinator and NCC Bishop Al Gwinn (right), speak with Tom Hazelwood (center), assistant general secretary for disaster response in the United States for the United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR). At the request of Bishop Gwinn, Hazelwood traveled to the conference to discuss the disaster response following the April tornadoes. The men were part of a group which traveled to several of the affected communities to see first-hand the devastation and needs for recovery efforts. Also participating were Steve Taylor, conference outreach ministry team coordinator; Bud Budzinski, chair of the conference disaster response committee; Melinda Ivey, Fayetteville District DR coordinator; Jo Elaine Harris, Raleigh District DR coordinator; Ann Huffman, conference disaster response volunteer coordinator; and Cliff Harvell, Greenville DR coordinator and vice-chair of the conference DR committee. For the tour, Garner UMC provided a bus driven by Ed Wilson. (Photos by Bill Norton)



Much repair and rebuilding is needed following the April 16 destruction, when 60 tornadoes damaged 7000 homes in North Carolina.

"The cleanup is almost done, and we wait for insurance and FEMA assessments to be completed. We will work with that information to determine how best we can offer rebuilding assistance," said Bud Budzinski, chair of the NC Conference disaster response committee.

Some of the damaged and destroyed homes are fully insured, some are underinsured, and others have no insurance. "It is specifically with the homes that are underinsured or uninsured that will need our help the most," Budzinski said.

"Rebuilding work that begins before the insurance and FEMA assessments have been completed may mean less financial support for the homeowner," he said. He estimates that there are at least 700 homes that will need workteams and financial assistance from conference churches.

As assessments are completed, the conference disaster response team will know where help is needed.

Budzinski encourages individuals or groups that want to be involved in rebuilding to call the conference disaster response number, 888-440-9167, and let them know of their availability. The team at the call center will know where the volunteer needs are and can offer assignments.

In addition to workteams, financial assistance helps disaster response know what assistance for materials and other needs can be offered. Conference churches were asked to take an offering for disaster response and send it to the NC Conference, P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260. Online donations can be made from the option on nccumc.org. Donations should be designated for Tornado Response. One-hundred percent of the donations will be used for the designated ministry.

Goodwill Foundation grant brings storm recovery funds over \$170K



The NC Conference received a \$50,000 grant for tornado relief from the Goodwill Industries of Eastern NC and the Goodwill Community Foundation. Dennis McLain, president of Goodwill, and Linda McLain, vice president, presented the \$50,000 check to Bishop Al Gwinn on May 20. The check will be added to \$117,000 received from local churches for the Conference Advance Special S00176. In addition, \$10,000 has been received from UMCOR. With the Goodwill donation, a total of \$177,000 is available for work in storm damaged areas across Eastern North Carolina. Shown in the photo, are (L-R) Linda McLain, Bishop Gwinn, and Dennis McLain.

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Six churches work together for tornado relief

Holy week services brought together the congregations of six small Rockingham churches. The tornado had moved through the Sanford area the weekend before. As a team effort the church bodies united and collected specific logistical items that had been requested. The efforts of this ministry turned into a van loaded with supplies. The participating churches were: Pee Dee UMC, Zion-Trinity, West Rockingham UMC, Beaver Dam-Roberdel, Philadelphia UMC, East Rockingham UMC. Donations were generous for the collection of supplies to support people in the tornado-damaged area in Sanford. Organizing donations are: (L-R) Mary Knight Carter, the Rev. Michael Griffin and Gerald Floyd.



South Carolina-based Early Response Team serves in North Carolina tornado cleanup efforts

Ten members of South Carolina UMC Volunteers In Mission's Disaster Response Team (Early Response Team – ERT) responded to the call of help to aid people in need due to the devastating tornados that hit across North Carolina. From April 21-23, the team worked in Rowland and Fayetteville, placing tarps and clearing trees.

Everywhere they went, the team heard stories of survival told by those who were spared by the grace of God. One team member said, "It is always such a wonderful and up-lifting feeling to see how so many good hearted people can come together for a common cause when people are in such need. You can see the best of people as they give their all to help others in need and you see the worst of people as you see people try to take advantage of people who are already in deep emotional distress."

The SC UMCVIM team had members from all across the state; including Dennis Brantley from Hollywood, Casey Canoge & Frank Gramling from Summerville, Nathan Welch of Simpsonville, Frank Seeby & Jim Caulder of Lexington, Sam & Beth Caskey of Columbia, Team Leader Billy Robinson & Jacob Robinson of North.

MERCI Ministries to be redirected

By Carol Goehring *

Banded Brothers, a not-for-profit organization that has provided management services at MERCI since the fall of 2009, will discontinue its operation of the MERCI Center in Goldsboro, effective July 31.

For 11 years MERCI Center has been a site for disaster response and mission support for the North Carolina Conference. Established after the devastating flood associated with Hurricanes Dennis and Floyd in 1999, MERCI has provided warehouse space for assembling flood buckets, health kits and school supplies, as well as, supplies for home repairs made necessary by natural or economic disaster.

"Banded Brothers appreciates the confidence the NC Conference has shown our organization and the opportunity we have had at MERCI Center," said Ben Jackson, the chairman MERCI Advisory Board and member of Banded Brothers.

The decision to end their operation of MERCI was made after 18 months of involvement. It was determined that the Center, as it is currently structured, relying on donations as the only source of income, is not sustainable. The cost for staffing and management of the facility averaged \$265,000 per year from 2007-2010 for payroll, utilities and insurance costs. Including the building maintenance and repairs, which averaged \$95,000, the total cost per year to run the facility as it was operating averages \$359,000.

MERCI does not receive Conference funds through the budget from a dedicated budget line. MERCI has been funded in varying amounts throughout the years for work it has provided at the request of conference groups or ministry areas.

Banded Brothers made a presentation to the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) on March 14. The JEC, made up of the executive committees of the Conference Connectional Table and the Conference Board of Trustees, considered three options presented for the future of MERCI in the Banded Brothers management report. Only one of the three included Banded Brothers' continued involvement, and it called for expansion of the ministry of the Center to include potential partnership for Emmaus walks and retreat opportunities.

While this option required a financial commitment from the Conference, the vision was to make MERCI Center attractive to new ministries, such as the Emmaus Community. The addition of dormitory housing, bathrooms and a kitchen also would enhance existing ministries like Footprints. The investment in facilities would allow MERCI to host conferences, concerts and other gatherings of a spiritual nature.

The other two options did not include Banded Brothers in the operations. One proposed a reduction in services, calling for MERCI to continue only as a disaster response ministry, to be open as needed for that purpose. The final option recommended the closing of the Center and disposal of the property.

The conference representatives to JEC did not officially respond to the options. They expressed gratitude for the assessment of the potential this group of business men provided through their work at MERCI. Because of their efforts to raise money for MERCI, there is more money coming in now than previous years and yet it is not enough to sustain the center in its current form of operation.

The Conference Connectional Table received news that Banded Brothers was ending their services at MERCI at the CCT meeting on May 9. The CCT decided to seek new ways of continuing the ministries of MERCI and when Banded Brothers ends their involvement July 31, to turn over the property to NC Conference Trustees.

The ministries will continue. Although tornado damage and destruction to homes and loss of lives in eastern NC occurred after Banded Brothers' decision, the need for disaster recovery is great and it will continue. Footprints, the ministry of service through youth mission teams, will be continued by the camps, expanding the potential for mission to areas that have not been served previously.

Charlie Gray, President of Banded Brothers, remains optimistic about the ministry, encouraging contributions for victims of the tornadoes so that the recovery can go on. Volunteers are ready to serve and to restore homes and lives.

* Carol Goehring is the executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries.

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Notice of publishing schedule change

The July/August edition of the NC Conference Christian Advocate is a combined two-month issue. It will feature a wrap-up of the 2011 Annual Conference. In September, monthly issues resume.

Leadership changes around the North Carolina Conference



Reginald Ponder, Sr.



Caswell Shaw

Ponder and Shaw appointed district superintendents

Two districts will have new superintendents, Bishop Al Gwinn has announced following consultation with the Cabinet and the appropriate district committees on superintendency.

Both appointments are retired elders and previously have served as superintendents.

The Rev. Dr. Reginald Ponder, Sr. will be appointed to the Sanford District and the Rev. Caswell Shaw will be appointed to the Rocky Mount district. Both are effective July 1.

Earlier this year Bishop Gwinn announced that the Rev. Bill Gattis would serve another year as Burlington District superintendent and the Rev. Leonard Fairley would serve another year as the Rockingham District superintendent.

Included in local churches where Ponder has served as pastor are Lovejoy-Macedonia, Leasburg, Rocky Mount: Englewood and Rocky Mount: First. He has served

as superintendent in the New Bern and Rocky Mount Districts. He has also held leadership positions at the Southeastern Jurisdiction and the Methodist Retirement Homes. He retired in 2005. Currently he serves as pastor of Elevation in the Goldsboro District.

Shaw served the following local churches: Temperance Hall, Nash, Burlington: Front Street (associate), White Plains in Cary, Tarboro: St. James, Graham: First, Greenville: St. James, and Rocky Mount: First. He also served as superintendent of the Rocky Mount and New Bern Districts. He retired in 2004 and often serves as a guest preacher.

Terry Hunt joins NCC connectional ministries staff

The Rev. Terry Hunt of Pembroke will join the Conference Connectional Ministries staff as Leadership Coordinator in July. In this new position, his primary responsibilities will be in church revitalization and connecting the local church with resources of the Conference and the General Church. Hunt also will serve as staff liaison to the Leadership Team of the Conference Connectional Table.

Hunt brings a variety of interests and experience to the work of the Conference. Seeking to "build up the Body of Christ by helping local congregations become healthy and effective places," is his personal goal.

"As a pastor he has led congregations to greater vitality by equipping leaders for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. He brings a love of teaching and experience in team-building for accomplishing the work of the church," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries.

A native of North Carolina, Hunt began his ministry as a student pastor while completing his bachelor's degree at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

He has served congregations in the North Carolina Conference and in Kentucky, where he attended Asbury Theological Seminary and earned his Master of Divinity degree. His current appointment is to First UMC, in Pembroke. He is an ordained Elder in the NC Conference.

In his role in the Conference Hunt will provide coaching for leaders and congregations, joining the other staff in the Office of Connectional Ministries in this new venture to maximize the potential of lay and clergy leaders and their churches. In addition, he will resource the committees that make up the Leadership Team, including Multicultural Ministries, Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, and the Board of Laity.



Terry Hunt

Dail Ballard named executive director of NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc.

The North Carolina United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries has announced that Dail D. Ballard has been hired as executive director. She began her new duties on May 15.

Ballard has been affiliated with the camping ministry since 1968 when she was a camper for the first time.

She continued on the summer staff in the '70's and in volunteer positions until 2007 when she began serving as development director for the ministry.

In addition to a long history with the camping ministry, Ballard brings with her nonprofit experience as well as business expertise from having had her own company for 20 years.

Brad Lienhart, interim executive director since December 2010, said he worked closely with Ballard as her supervisor during the last six months while she served as deputy executive director.

"Dail is a tireless and dedicated leader with a great passion for the NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries. I have been very impressed with her planning and communications skills. She has the confidence and trust of all our full-time staff. The executive directorship is not an easy job, but I have every confidence that Dail is the right person to lead our Camp and Retreat Ministries forward to a new level of



Dail Ballard

excellence," Lienhart said.

Ballard said she is "excited about the future of the Camp & Retreat Ministries and energized by its dedicated staff at all three camps: Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish."

DEATHS

PAYNE, Argel Harold (Raleigh: retired) died on May 1. The funeral service was held May 4 at Garner UMC.

HEDRICK, Lonnie, (Greenville: Holly Springs) died May 8. The funeral service was held at First UMC: Washington on May 12.

WRIGHT, Iva Harris, widow of Carl K. Wright died May 7. A memorial service was conducted May 23 at the Brown Chapel at Cypress Glen Retirement Community.

BIRTH

Zoë Harriet Peck-McClain was born May 3. Her parents are Andy (Durham: Epworth associate) and Emily Peck-McClain.

2011 CHANGE

The second annual Change the World weekend was held in May. This global movement encourages United Methodists to do what they can to improve lives and communities. In 15 countries, United Methodists reached out to their neighbors through more than 2,000 projects. Included here are the stories from a few of the NC Conference churches who participated.

Eight churches gather in Martin County to package meals

Among thousands of United Methodists participating in the worldwide mission initiative "Change the World," were approximately 100 members of eight United Methodist churches in and near Martin County gathered to serve.

They met at Jimmy Hardison's farm on US-64 East on May 15 to package meals to feed impoverished and hungry people around the world through Operation Sharehouse, a ministry of Stop Hunger Now (SHN).

The eight participating churches raised almost \$9,000 and packaged over 30,000 meals in two hours.

This was the fourth year that United Methodists from Bethel, Holly Springs, Jamesville, Robersonville, Siloam, Stokes, Vernon, and First UMC, Williamston have joined together for this event.

Four years ago, after participating in an Operation Sharehouse event for United Methodist pastors in Greenville, Holly Springs UMC pastor Lonnie Hedrick saw the program as an opportunity to serve the Lord, feed the hungry, and fellowship together in Christian community.

This year's event was particularly meaningful as Hedrick died unexpectedly on May 8, one week before the event. Holly Springs UMC honored Lonnie's memory and spirit by continuing with their commitment to host this event even in the midst of grieving his loss.

Stop Hunger Now, an international relief organization, is headquartered in Raleigh and was established in 1998 with the vision of a world without hunger.

Its mission is to provide food and



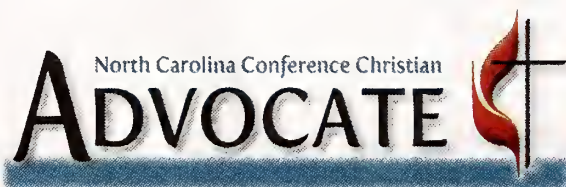
life-saving aid to the world's most vulnerable people. Since its inception, SHN has delivered food aid and disaster relief supplies in the form of food, medicines, medical supplies, medical equipment, clothing and blankets to thousands of disaster victims and other hungry and vulnerable people in seventy-nine countries.

SHN's meal packaging program is a

volunteer-based program that coordinates the streamlined packaging of highly nutritious dehydrated meals comprised of rice, soy, vegetables, flavoring and 21 essential vitamins and minerals. Meals are easily transported to crisis-burdened areas or supplied to school feeding programs. Each package provides 6 meals at a cost to create of only \$0.25 per meal.



Epworth UMC in Durham participated in the Change the World event through a Stop Hunger Now event on April 30. Church members packaged nearly 20,000 meals that will feed many who would otherwise go hungry.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

THE WORLD



UM Communications Webcast: Youth Leader, Sean Walker talks on the webcase about Cornerstone's youth group and their involvement in the community. Others in the photo include Pastor Edgar DeJesus, Christine Belmont, Cody Brown, Colby Davis, Michael Davis, Douglas Dalton, Melody Davis, Nick Walker, Wayne Haiduven, Fayetteville District Superintendent Sam Wynn, Social Worker Allison Hines, NC Conference BRAC liaison Jaye White, Danielle Darnell, Larry Perez, and with back to the camera, Helga Perez.

CTW event at Cornerstone UMC, Fayetteville, featured in live webcast

By Sharon Upchurch *

"As people called Methodists, God calls us to roll up our sleeves, get our hands dirty and be the hands and feet of Christ," said Cornerstone UMC pastor, the Rev. Edgar De Jesus.

A young, multicultural, mission-driven community of faith located in west Fayetteville, Cornerstone was selected from 15 countries to be part of the Global Live Stream interview for the 2011 Change the World-Rethink Church event.

They were the only church in North Carolina selected by United Methodist Communications to be part of the streaming. The interview can be seen at www.cornerstoneumc-online.com.

Serving as the hands and feet of Christ "is at the very core of Jesus' mission and ministry and should be embodied in our everyday lives," De Jesus said.

"People are losing jobs and their health insurance in Fayetteville. There are families affected by the recent tornadoes that hit our community. Many military families in Fayetteville and nearby Fort Bragg are struggling with family and marriage breakdown, domestic violence, drugs, alcoholism, post traumatic stress disorder and other dysfunctional conditions. People are looking for hope and meaning in life," said De Jesus.

Attended by more than 300 people from the community, the event was

a collaborative effort between Cornerstone UMC and its next-door neighbor E.E. Miller Elementary School. The church and school initially collaborated to serve working families with children at E.E. Miller who needed affordable daycare after school.

"It was a simple idea from a simple story that later became a vision that is larger than what we can imagine," said De Jesus.

In October 2010, they formed a task force to plan for the "Change the World" Community Empowerment Weekend. Team members brainstormed on how they could best reach out to the community and the kinds of meaningful ways to offer healing, hope and transformation.

"Shared vision, partnership and a common purpose of engaging in ministry with the poor are key components in our Change the World weekend," he said.

To help raise awareness in the community of the resources available, the task force worked with various non-profit, faith-based and community-based organizations such as NC Conference BRAC Mission Developer, Army Community Services, Cumberland County Department of Social Services, Agency on Aging, Fayetteville Police Department, Fayetteville Fire Department, Military Family Liaison Consultant (MFLC), Hungry Angelz, Camp Rockfish, Fayetteville Parks & Recreation, Partnership for Children, Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts, and others. The event provided the

community basic information and awareness about access to basic social services, military family support, parenting, domestic violence awareness, community safety awareness, spiritual counseling, and many others.

"We also collected hundreds of non-perishable food items to help feed our hungry neighbors through

the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Carolina," De Jesus said.

"Indeed, God inspired our church with a simple story to change the world. And Cornerstone Church is already looking forward for the 2012 Change the World," De Jesus said.

* Sharon Upchurch is a member of Cornerstone UMC.

11 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Rekindling the Flame of the Laity

This laity conference provides an opportunity to experience Jesus Christ and to grow in the Christian Faith and relationship through great preaching, Bible study, inspiring singing, special music, and Christian fellowship as families. This family experience focuses on the theme of "Christ's Mission and Ours." Workshops to be offered include: Prison Ministry, Revitalizing Small/Middle Size Churches, United Methodist Men Ministry, United Methodist Women in Mission, Relational Evangelism Ministry, Disaster Response/UMVIM Ministry. For more information on the events, workshops, cost, and registration, go to <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/rekindling-the-flame/>.

Musicians and Worship Leaders event

The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts is co-sponsoring a learning event July 18-19 at Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek. Participants will have an opportunity to attend reading sessions of new music, preview and purchase "Worship and Song," the new UM hymnal supplement and worship resource, choose an area of training that best fits the needs of what they do in the local church, and learn from nationally-known clinicians Pepper Choplin, David Schwoebel, Mark Edwards, and Terry Taylor. Visit <http://divinity.campbell.edu/Oasis/Home.aspx> for more information. Registration deadline is July 8.

North Carolina Annual Conference 2011

aFuture with HOPE Leading to Christ

When approximately 1600 lay and clergy members of the North Carolina Annual Conference gather for their yearly meeting June 15-18, it will be in a new location, the Raleigh Convention Center, and voting will be done using state-of-the-art devices that give results in minutes.

During the four-day conference, members will gather for worship and prayer, take action on a proposed \$20.3 million budget and other financial matters, five resolutions, and participate in local church leadership development and two service projects.

The conference will conclude following the service of commissioning and ordination and announcement of clergy assignments.

The plenary meeting area, Exhibit Hall B in the Raleigh Convention Center, has more space than past conferences. The exhibit hall has 54, 269 square feet of space which is almost twice the size of last year's meeting location in Greenville.

A major item that will be before the members will be the election of 18 General Conference delegates, nine laypersons and nine clergy.

Joining that group will be 18 more elected delegates, nine clergy and nine lay persons, to form the 36-member Southeastern Jurisdictional Delegation, and five additional lay persons and five additional clergy

as alternates.

The United Methodist Church General Conference and Southeastern Jurisdictional Conferences meet every four years. General Conference is the only group that can speak for the denomination and it is the group that approves church laws and policies. A primary responsibility of Jurisdictional Conferences is the election of bishops.

Voting

Each member will have a voting device, similar to a TV remote control, to designate their choices for delegates and other issues before the conference.

At registration, clergy will receive a workbook of clergy who want to be considered for election as a delegate. Lay members will receive a worksheet with lay persons interested in being elected. Clergy will only vote for clergy and lay members will only vote for lay delegates. Voting will continue throughout the conference until the full delegation is elected.

Any layperson who has been a member of a United Methodist Church in the conference for two years and active in the UMC for four years is eligible for election. Clergy who are full deacons or full elders can be elected.

May 3 was the deadline for laity who would like to be considered for

delegate elections to submit their biographies. As in past elections, these biographies were printed in a book mailed to lay conference members. The book is arranged in alphabetical order with each name having a designated number for use in voting. These names and numbers also appear on a Lay Nominee Worksheet distributed at registration.

Additional names of laity who missed the May 3 deadline and want to be considered for election could be added to the bottom of the Nominee Worksheet at conference. This will require a suspension of conference rules for the addition. Biographies of these additional nominees would have to be printed by the nominee and distributed as indicated by the Conference Secretary.

There is also a book with clergy names with assigned voting numbers. It contains the 735 deacons and elders eligible for election.

In previous conferences, voting has been by paper ballot. "Voting results in previous conferences would take at least 45 minutes. With the voting devices, results this year can be seen on the six projection screens around the conference floor within a couple of minutes," said Jerry Bryan, conference secretary.

On Saturday after the conference adjourns, the full elected delegation will hold an organizational meeting. The time and location will be announced during conference.

Special Offerings and Service projects

An offering for the Ryan Epps home in Haiti will be taken during the Wednesday evening worship. A second offering, for Imagine No Malaria, will be taken Thursday eve-

ning and an offering for lay ministries will be taken Friday evening.

Members will have the opportunity to participate in two service projects. Thursday afternoon, from 5-7 p.m. Stop Hunger Now will have

food items in the large entrance area one floor up from the conference registration area to be assembled in packages. The goal is to package 20,000 meals to feed individuals without access to food.

A second service project called Love for Liberia is collecting school supplies for students, and other supplies needed at the Ganta United Methodist Mission Hospital/ community health ministry and the mission station

schools. More information is available at nccumc.org, then select Ministry, then Outreach Ministry, and Love for Liberia on the listing at the left side of the page.

Wednesday – executive sessions, opening of conference

At 1 p.m. on Wednesday, June 15, an executive session for clergy will be held in the Raleigh Marriott State Ballroom, and an executive session for laity will be in the Convention Center Exhibit Hall B.

The opening of the conference in plenary session begins at 3 p.m. with the singing of "Are We Yet Alive." Between the opening and 5 p.m., the conference will be called to order, rules will be adopted, and the first round of balloting will be held. All plenary sessions will be held in the Convention Center Exhibit Hall B.

At 7:30 p.m. the first worship service will be held, including a celebration of Holy Communion. Bishop

See "2011 Annual Conference," page 7



Each member will have a voting device, similar to a TV remote control, to designate their choices for delegates and other issues before the conference.



2011 Resources and Reports

2011 Annual Conference Overview	6-7
Conference Information, Assistance, Map	8
Nametags and Voting	8
Council on Finance and Administration Report	9-13
Board of Pensions: Report B.	14-17
Commission on Equitable Compensation	17-18
Committee on Insurance	18-20
Joint Committee on Incapacity.	20-21
Conference Guest Speakers	22
Proposed Resolutions	23-25
Report on Task Force on District Superintendency.	25

2011 Annual Conference overview

Continued from page 6

Hope Morgan Ward, resident bishop of the Mississippi Conference and a former clergy member of the NC Conference, will serve as the preacher (*see page 22*). Bishop Al Gwinn, resident bishop of the NC Conference and the presider during all conference sessions, will lead the worship service.

Thursday morning – finances, Memorial Service

Included in Thursday morning's agenda will be presentation of the conference budget (*see page 11*). Conference rules call for the budget to be presented one day and voted on the next. The proposed budget of \$20,345,047 is \$578 less than the approved budget at the last conference.

For seven years in a row, no health insurance increase has been presented to the conference. This year, the proposal (*see pages 18-20*), which would take effect in 2012, keeps the local church portion the same at \$918.02 per month. Clergy and lay persons on the plan would have a premium, co-payment for doctor visits, prescription, and deductible increases for 2012.

A special feature of the proposed insurance plan would give anyone on the plan the option of paying an additional fee, on top of the proposed premium increase, to keep co-pays, and other features the same as in the 2011 plan.

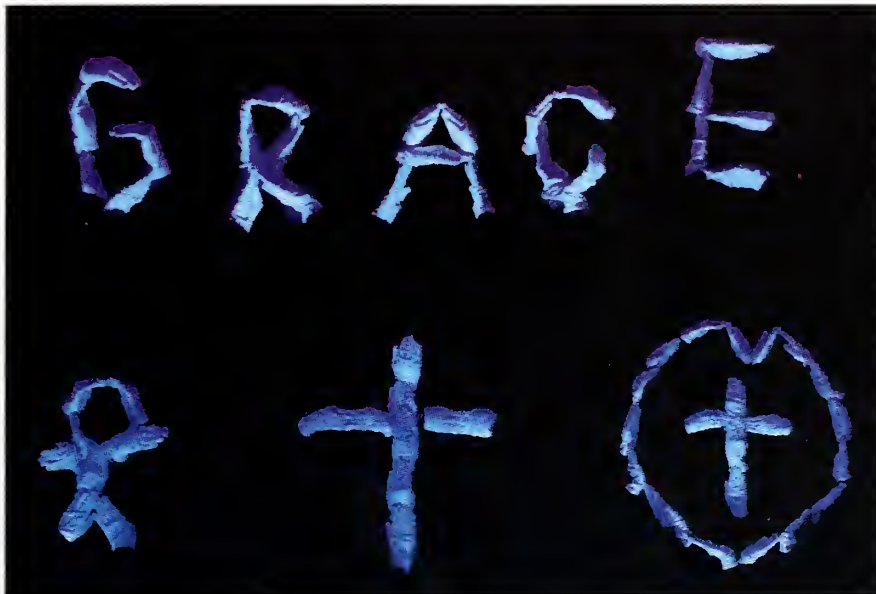
Proposed NC Conference budget requests for pension, equitable salary, and incapacity leave remain the same as the 2011 amounts.

The Conference Board of Pension is recommending that the per service year rate for the pre-1982 pension plan not increase. The Past Service Liability apportionment in the budget is also recommended to remain the same (*see pages 14-17*).

The Commission on Equitable Compensation is recommending that the minimum salary for 2012 remain at the 2011 level (*see pages 17-18*).

Incapacity benefits for those clergy on incapacity leave are proposed to be changed (*see pages 20-21*). The committee proposes that clergy on incapacity leave be required to pay the same personal premium for insurance coverage that those on the active plan pay.

They also propose that clergy on incapacity leave pay their personal premium plus 25% of the church cost after 30 months of leave, the time



that they would be coordinated with Medicare.

There is an order of the day at 10:45 a.m. on Thursday for the Memorial Service to honor clergy and/or their spouse who have died since the last conference. Bishop Ward will be the preacher and Bishop Gwinn will lead the service.

Thursday afternoon – retirees, institutions, BRAC, Districts

The afternoon session will be a time to recognize retiring pastors, reports from the Board of Institutions, camping and retreat ministries, home for children, and recognition of college presidents.

A task force on district superintendency appointed by Bishop Gwinn in 2009 will bring a report proposing that the current 12 districts be dissolved and eight new districts formed (*see page 25*).

"The goal of the task force work and the new district alignments is to better assist local congregations in their efforts to focus on the drivers of vitality and ministry action plans as they seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," said Bishop Gwinn.

Included in the proposal is a reduction of the number of committees a district superintendent is on so more time can be devoted to coaching, mentoring, teaching, team-building and vision casting in local churches.

The Discipline says the Annual Conference decides the number of districts but the bishop "forms the districts." If the Annual Conference approves the report, Bishop Gwinn will appoint a transition team to assist

in the transfer of property and assets. The districts would remain at 12 until the 2012 conference.

Discussion with the bishop and cabinet on drawing new district lines includes population and potential as points of consideration. A suggested map (*see page 25*) shows on how districts might be aligned.

"Any new district lines will only be decided after consultation with lay and clergy leaders as well as local congregations," Bishop Gwinn said.

A report on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) will be made by Brigadier General William J. Gothard, deputy commanding general (support) / chief of staff, US Army Reserve Command and a member of Haymount UMC in Fayetteville (*see page 22*).

In 2009 it was announced that an estimated 40,000 military and civilian personnel and their families were to have arrived at Fort Bragg as part of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Brigadier General William J. Gothard will update the conference on the status of BRAC.

The afternoon session will end following the presentation of Acts II churches, those examples selected in each district that practice radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional spiritual formation, and risk-taking mission and ministry to the world.

Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Bishop Gwinn will deliver the State of the Church Address.

Friday – budget, resolutions, awards

On Friday, June 17 during the morning session, conference members

TOP: IGNITE (In God, Nothing Is Too Extreme) is the Youth Worship Arts Ministry from Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington. The 60-member group is for youth in grades 6-12 who enjoy using the performing arts (music, dance, and drama) as a way to worship and to minister to others, especially those who may not have heard the gospel. They lead worship monthly and have sung for numerous homeless shelters, rescue missions, nursing homes, and children's homes in the state and beyond. IGNITE is under the direction of PJ Bolduc.

BOTTOM: GLOW (God Lights Our World) is a youth hand mime ministry of Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington, NC in which black lights and white gloves are used to create images and words set to Christian music. The group was formed in the fall of 2007. Since then, GLOW has performed for numerous events including the Harmony for Humanity concert in Wilmington, Pilgrimage and the Conference UMW Annual Meeting in Fayetteville, and at SonPower National Youth Choir Conference in Orlando.

will vote on the budget and take action on five resolutions (*see pages 23-25*).

The afternoon will include presentation of awards and a 2 p.m. Order of the Day for the Celebration of the Laity.

At 3 p.m., Laurie Beth Jones, a best-selling author, speaker, coach, and trainer, will be the presenter. Her business books are written from a spiritual perspective (*see page 22*).

"It is my hope that Laurie Beth will help us build healthy, effective teams in our local congregations so we will make giant steps toward honoring God in our local church work and ministry," Bishop Gwinn said.

She will have another presentation during the 7:30 p.m. session.

Two youth groups, IGNITE, a youth music, dance, and drama group, and GLOW, a youth hand mime ministry, will begin the evening session. Both groups are from Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington.

Saturday – ordination, appointments announced, sending forth

The Saturday session, beginning at 9:30 p.m. is a worship service of ordination and commissioning of clergy and passing the mantle from the retiring class to a beginning group.

Dr. Timothy Tennent, president of Asbury Theological Seminary will be the morning preacher (*see page 22*).

The conference will conclude following the announcement of clergy assignments, called fixing of the appointments, a sending forth service, and the singing of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

Annual Conference information and assistance

Registration for the NC Annual Conference will take place on the Mezzanine Level of the Raleigh Convention Center. The Mezzanine Level is on the Cabarrus Street side of the convention center.

Along the Mezzanine Level walls are various display tables of conference related ministries.

Directly across from the Registration Area is the entrance into Exhibit Hall B where the conference sessions will be held. Voting devices will be distributed to conference members in this entrance area. The entrance leads to the escalators that go to the conference floor. On the right before reaching the escalators are an elevator and stairs. Stairs are also available on the wall opposite the escalators.

Voting devices will be distributed to conference members in the entrance area before reaching the elevators. Devices are designated for clergy or lay members. Each member should only use their own voting device. When members leave the conference, or if a member leaves early, the devices should be returned to the registration area. If a lay alternate replaces a lay conference member, the alternate should report to the registration area for a nametag and a voting device.

Members or guests can sit anywhere on the conference floor and a member's voting device will work in any location. Anyone can use the round tables but building supports block viewing the stage from some seats.

Restrooms are located behind the escalators and on the wall opposite the escalators across the conference floor.

Name Tags and Voting Information

All nametags are white with a colored lanyard. The lanyard colors indicate the following and assist the tellers with counting any necessary votes that are taken. *Members are asked to wear their name tag and lanyard at all times. Upon leaving annual conference, please return lanyards and voting devices to the annual conference registration desk.*

Blue - Lay Members, At Large Members

Vote on all deliberations/measures other than clerical license, ordination, and reception, except those who are lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Blue - Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers

As lay members of the Conference, they have same voting rights as lay members.

Red - Clergy Members (Deacons/Elders) in Full Connection, Associates and Probationary Members and Local Pastors (have completed MDiv. or Course of Study and served two years prior).

Vote on all matters of the Annual Conference other than in election of lay delegates to SEJ and General Conferences.

Green - Other Local Pastors

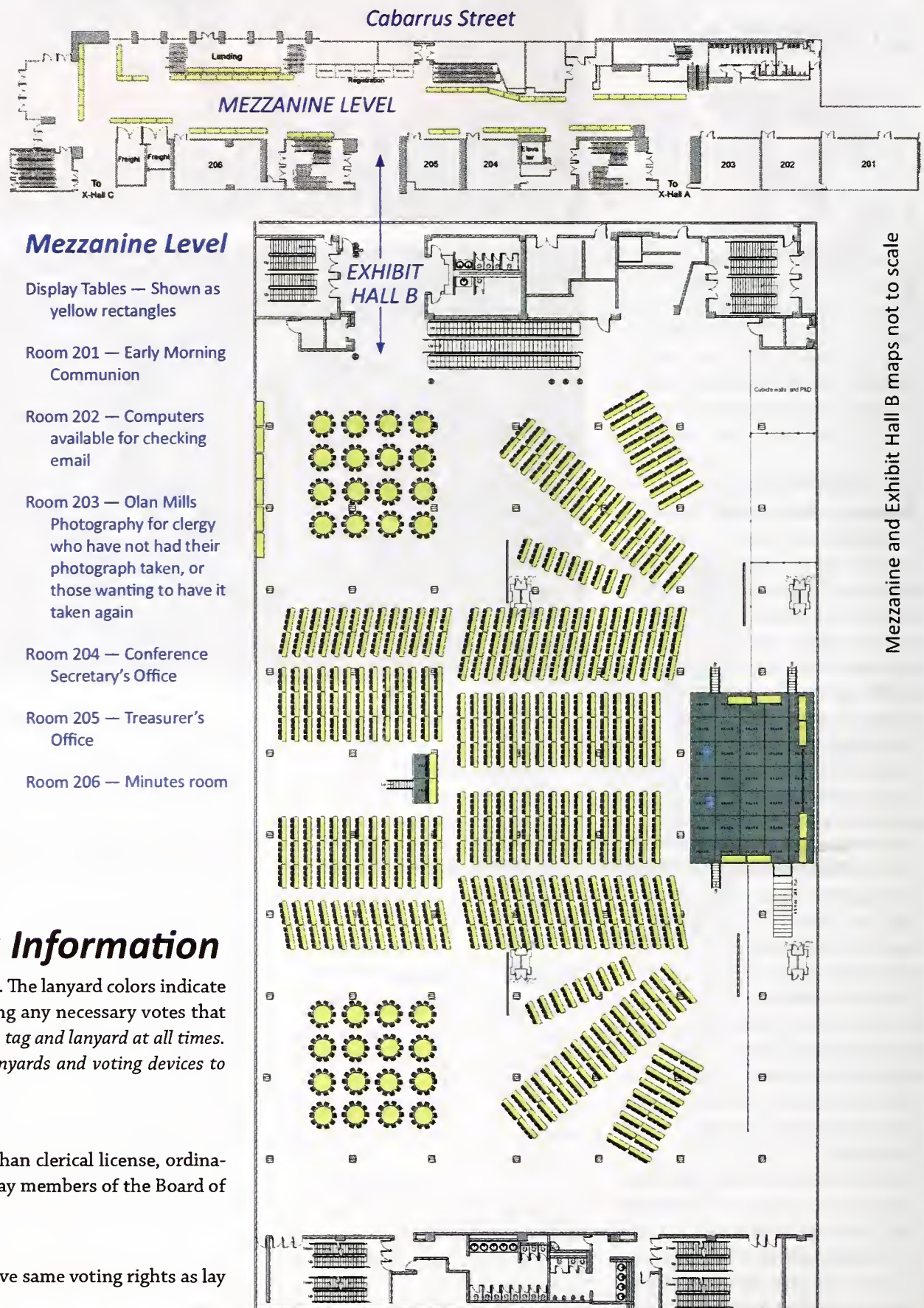
Other Local Pastors under appointment vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to SEJ/General Conferences, ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

Yellow - Student Pastors, Interim Supplies, Members of Other Conferences, Affiliates

These have no vote and have no voice unless granted on the floor of the Conference, except for Student Pastors, who have a voice but no vote.

Black - New Pastors and Official Staff Members

All Annual Conference staff, available for your assistance, will be wearing black lanyards with Staff indicated on the nametag. New Pastors - receiving first appointment this conference. (These have no vote and have no voice unless granted on the floor of the conference.)



First aid

Persons requiring medical attention during the week of Annual Conference, are asked to report to the Registration Area for assistance. Sheila King, RN, from the Wilmington District, will be the nurse on-site to assist those in need.

Wireless access

Internet access at Annual Conference is available on the conference floor, but there is a charge for using the Raleigh Convention Center network. Free Internet access is available on the front plaza and parts of the front lobby for four hours a day per computer.

Watch online

Annual Conference sessions, including worship and ordination services will be available for viewing "live" via Internet during the conference. Visit nccumc.org for instructions.

Council on Finance and Administration Report

III. FINANCIAL POLICIES

The United Methodist Church is a connectional church, and all local churches participate in the mission and service giving of the larger church. The outreach and mission giving opportunities of the Connection are distributed to the churches of the NC Conference by means of a formula based on the financial performance in each local church. Every effort is made to develop a computation which is shared with fairness by all. Church leaders are encouraged to interpret the work of the Connection so that each congregation understands these funds to be a necessary extension of the ministry and mission of the church beyond its local organization.

A. APPORTIONMENTS:

1. The funds to be apportioned are:
 - World Service and Connectional Ministries
 - Past Service Liability - Pensions
 - Episcopal Fund
 - Interdenominational Cooperation Fund
 - Black College Fund
 - Africa University Fund
 2. Formula: The Apportionments for each year shall be based on the average of the total monies disbursed by each church in the four years immediately previous to the apportionment year less the approved exclusions each year, or on the most recent year less the approved exclusions, whichever is lower. The change in unadjusted apportionments from the previous year shall not increase in excess of 15%. The exclusions are: Payments on World Service and Connectional Ministries, Past Service Liability – Pensions, Episcopal Fund, and all other apportionments; district work fund; principal and interest on indebtedness; buildings and improvements; 50% of property insurance; local benevolences paid directly by the local church; General and Conference Advance Specials; Ten Dollar Club; up to \$4,500 for travel paid by a charge for each pastor; United Methodist Student Day; Human Relations Day; Peace and Justice Sunday; Native American Awareness Sunday; One Great Hour of Sharing; World Communion Sunday; UMW Funds sent to district or conference treasurer; housing allowance paid in lieu of furnished parsonage to a minister serving under Episcopal appointment in a charge of the Conference; offerings taken for disasters as designated by the Disaster Response Committee and the Resident Bishop.
 3. Effective July 1, 2004, new congregations shall be assigned an apportionment beginning in the year in which the church is chartered (Year A in the following table). The new and projected charter dates for all new churches shall be reported annually by the Office of Congregational Development to the Treasurer's Office immediately following Annual Conference. The amount to be apportioned shall be a percentage of the apportionment as computed on the standard formula described in III.A.2 above. Because this formula results in a lower apportionment for a longer period than earlier new church formulas, no adjustment will be allowed to the apportionment computed as shown in the following table:
- | Year | Percent | Base Year Net Disbursement Formula | Maximum % Change |
|------|---------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| A | 0% | None | None |
| B | 60% | $=(4A)/4$ | None |
| C | 65% | $=((3A)+B)/4$ | None |
| D | 70% | $=((2A)+B+C)/4$ | None |
| E | 75% | $=(A+B+C+D)/4$ | None |
| F | 80% | $=(B+C+D+E)/4$ | None |
| G | 85% | $=(C+D+E+F)/4$ | None |
| H | 90% | $=(D+E+F+G)/4$ | None |
| I | 95% | $=(E+F+G+H)/4$ | None |
| J | 100% | $=(F+G+H+I)/4$ | None |
4. Apportionments to the churches shall be made by the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) based on the current formula. Each cause shall be paid proportionately out of the income from funds received up to the amount fixed by the Annual Conference. In the event receipts shall fall short, all items shall be paid pro-rata. The CFA is authorized to make supplementary appropriations between sessions of the Annual Conference, if funds are available, for emergency or unforeseen needs. Such supplementary appropriations shall be made only from available undesignated funds. It is the intent of CFA that 50% of supplemental funds available be designated for the retirement of our current liabilities. In the light of possible unforeseen and emergency need beyond available resources within the Annual Conference, the CFA is authorized to adjust the pro-rata distribution by up to 10% at its discretion and is authorized to use such funds to make supplementary appropriations according to this provision. General Church apportionments will be paid in full as collected to general agencies and will not be subject to adjusted pro-rata distributions. All supplementary appropriations made under these provisions shall be reported in the Conference Journal for purposes of information.
 5. Apportionments will be delivered from the treasurer's office to the district superintendents by **July 15, 2011**.
 6. The percentage payout rate for local churches shall be based upon payment of all six apportioned items as listed in Section III.A.1. above.
 - B. The following special offerings shall be taken in each local church and remitted to the Conference treasurer as separate items. They are not to be included in the Apportionments. General Church special offerings include United Methodist Student Day, Human Relations Day, Peace with Justice Sunday, Native American Awareness Sunday, One Great Hour of Sharing, and World Communion Sunday. Annual Conference approved special offerings include Project AGAPE Mission to Armenia, Methodist Home for Children, Mother's Day Offering for the Methodist Retirement Homes, Golden Cross Sunday and Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries.
 - C. No Conference agency's budget shall incorporate funds to be appropriated to a non-conference agency, without specific approval of CFA. All funds granted to a non-conference agency must be spent consistent with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.
 - D. No transfer of funds shall be made from one line item in the Conference Budget to another.
 - E. All General Church Funds (World Service, Episcopal, Ministerial Education, Black Colleges, Africa University, Interdenominational Cooperation, General Administration), Past Service Liability Fund, Jurisdictional Conference, and Methodist Building Routine and Capital Maintenance Funds will be raised and paid out in the same year. College Sustaining Fund will be raised and paid out in the same year until funds are received in advance equivalent to one year's budget. This transition will take place over 4 years beginning in 2010 and ending in 2013 operating budgets. All other funds will be raised and paid out in the subsequent year on a schedule determined by the CFA.
 - F. Investment Policy: The investment of the funds of the conference shall be such that funds available for mission are maximized in a manner consistent with the preservation of capital and with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. Investments are with the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. (local), the United Methodist Church Foundation (national), area banks, and with specific minority financial institutions within the bounds of the NC Conference. Investments of funds reserved for use in the next budget year shall be invested 50% fixed income investments and 50% equity investments.
 - G. Monies paid by the churches shall be reported to the statistician by the pastors at the end of the year on the Table II, Financial Report. The Table I and Table II reports for **2011** shall be due to the statistician no later than **January 31, 2012**.
 - H. The Council may enact its own bylaws governing meetings, quorum, and other matters of procedure as authorized in the *Discipline*, Para. 610.5.b.
 - I. The Council shall maintain a central treasury for all Conference agencies as authorized by Para. 611.11 of the *Discipline*, and the 1953 session of the Annual Conference. Annual Conference boards and agencies, including those separately incorporated, are required to maintain their funds on deposit in the central treasury unless exempted by the Annual Conference or the *Discipline*. Exemptions are granted to the Methodist Home for Children, the Methodist Retirement Homes, the Colleges, the United Methodist Foundation, Inc., Board of Missions, Inc., Asbury Homes, and North Carolina United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc.
 - J. All new programs or entities which would not be funded by an existing approved budget shall be referred to the CFA for review of budget needs and supplemental funds available prior to approval by Annual Conference. If the item is approved, the next year's budget shall be amended to include the necessary funds based on the CFA recommendation.
 - K. Contracts executed by commissions, boards, or agencies which obligate the Annual Conference must: 1) be created for periods of no more than 12 months and should be completed by June 30 annually, 2) not involve expenditures exceeding \$50,000 in the aggregate and 3) not include a guarantee by the Conference of debt incurred by a separately incorporated entity. All contracts that exceed a 12-month period and/or \$50,000 must be authorized by the Council on Finance and Administration. Should authorization be needed between meetings of CFA, it can be given by two signatures from the Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, the president of CFA or the Conference Treasurer and will require ratification by CFA at its next meeting.

IV. ITINERANT CLERGY MOVING EXPENSE

Effective Date – June 1, 2011

The Itinerant Clergy Moving Expense Committee met to study moving expense needs and policies. The Committee makes the following recommendations.

A. Eligibility

1. Pastors of local churches continuing under appointment to local churches within the Conference, district superintendents, and Conference ministerial staff whose salaries are paid from the Conference Treasurer's office.
2. Pastors in section A.1. who become Conference Evangelists upon moving from an appointment to new residence. Their moving expense

Committee on Finance & Administration Report - from page 9

to return to any of the above categories will also be paid.

3. Pastors in section A.1 who retire from serving appointment or who assume approved incapacity leave or return into active service from approved incapacity leave.
 4. Widows or widowers of those identified in section A.1. upon moving from place of appointment to new residence.
 5. Pastors moving into an appointment in the North Carolina Conference to assume full-time or student appointments under section A.1.
 6. Interim Supply pastors
 7. Pastors being appointed to leave of absence are entitled to moving expense for one leave of absence.
 8. Pastors who are called to active military duty will be entitled to moving expense at the time of call up, if need be, and at the time of return, if need be, if not covered by the military, with substantiation of the military orders.
 9. Persons moving who are not defined above will not be eligible to make claim.
- B. Payment of Claims
1. All reimbursements must be substantiated with paid receipts for actual moving expenses. All reimbursements must be for expenses which are deductible for income tax purposes according to Internal Revenue code, Section 217, non-taxable fringe benefits. Payment will be granted to all who are eligible to make claims as follows:
 - a. Active itinerant clergy in section A.1., A.2., A.5., A.6., A.7. and A.8. (except retiring clergy, widows, widowers, and clergy couples) will receive reimbursement of costs up to \$2,000.00 with submission of paid receipts for actual moving expense.
 - b. Retiring itinerant clergy, widows or widowers will receive reimbursement of costs up to \$3,000.00 with submission of paid receipts for actual moving expenses. The retirement amount may be granted upon request when taking incapacity leave in lieu of receiving the retirement benefit at retirement.
 - c. Itinerant clergy couples will receive reimbursement of costs up to \$2,400.00 with submission of paid receipts for actual moving expenses. If only one member of the clergy couple is re-appointed, section B.1.a. will apply.
 2. Travel: Mileage is reimbursed at the standard IRS rate for moving expense deductions. This rate may be paid per mile per vehicle for a single trip to move each vehicle to the new residence. If a vehicle is used to move household goods, i.e., in lieu of a moving company, additional trips maybe reimbursed as necessary. The per trip mileage will be computed from appointment to appointment, or from the Conference boundary to the appointment, or from the appointment to the residence/Conference boundary (in case of retirement), whichever is less. Either the mileage as described above or actual out of pocket expenses for gas, oil, etc. may be reimbursed from the Conference boundary.
 3. Reporting and Payment Requirements
 - a. IRS guidelines require that moving expense reimbursements be reported on a W-2. Based on recommendation from legal counsel and their consultations with the Internal Revenue Service, we recommend that the W-2 be issued by the local church. The Conference Treasurer will provide to the local church all moving expense information to be reported on the W-2. The Conference Treasurer will make payment to the new local church appointment. The new local church will pay the clergy and include the moving expense on the W-2 that they issue to the pastor at the end of the year. In absence of a new appointment, payment will be made to and reported by the old appointment.
 - b. The Conference Treasurer will make this payment upon receiving the Itinerant Clergy Moving Expense Requisition form signed by the person receiving reimbursement and approved by the sending District Superintendent, along with appropriate receipts to substantiate the expenses.
 - c. The pastor should send the completed document, "So You're Moving" checklist to the sending District Superintendent. This will fulfill the 2008 Discipline, Paragraph 2532.4, which states "The chairperson of the board of trustees or the chairperson of the parsonage committee, if one exists, the chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish relations, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to ensure proper maintenance."
 - d. Moving expense funds will be withheld by the Conference treasurer if the district superintendent determines that the parsonage was inadequately cleaned or was damaged beyond normal wear and tear. If an inspection by the district superintendent and the pastor-parish relations committee or the parsonage committee reveals monetary needs for cleaning or repairs, or for having the fuel tank filled, the remaining balance of the moving expense due said pastor shall be made payable to the respective district to pay for needed cleaning or repairs. If the district superintendent or the moving pastor is NOT in agreement with said pastor-parish relations committee or the parsonage

committee, the superintendent may request the arbitration committee of the clergy living committee to inspect the parsonage involved and give an impartial recommendation.

4. The Conference treasurer will make an advance payment up to \$600.00 to eligible itinerant clergy to cover the expense of deposit and fees for moving expenses prior to their move, upon approval by the district superintendent. Those receiving an advance must substantiate their expenditures, and any money that is let over shall be refunded to the Conference treasurer. All advance payments shall be included in W-2 information provided to the local church by the Conference treasurer for inclusion on the W-2.
 5. No additional claim can be made against a local church, district or the Conference for payment of moving expenses.
 6. Reimbursable expenses include the cost of boarding and moving domestic animals, the moving of recreational vehicles, moving household and personal goods, travel as defined in B.2., lodging, packing, crating, in-transit storage and insurance, labor costs, and any other expense necessary to physically move household items. Expenses which are not reimbursable include meals, purchase of household items, or any other item not reasonable or necessary for the move.
 7. The request for moving expense reimbursement must be received in the Treasurer's Office no later than four months following the date of the move.
 8. Reimbursement will be considered a qualified, non-taxable fringe benefit not subject to income and self-employment tax when:
 - Your move is 50 or more miles from the old appointment to the new appointment **and**
 - Your new appointment is full time for at least 39 weeks during the first 12 months at the new location.

If your new appointment does not meet the above conditions, then the reimbursement will be reported as taxable for both income and employment tax. However, if your reimbursement is treated as table income, an additional stipend in the amount of 20% of the taxable income portion will be provided. The maximum stipend will be no more than 20% of the applicable limit stated in section B.1.
- C. Review Committee
1. There will be a Review Committee consisting of two persons appointed by the chairperson of the Council on Finance and Administration, one district superintendent appointed by the Bishop, the Conference Treasurer, the director of Ministerial Relations and the chair of the Moving Expense Committee.
 2. The Review Committee will consider and have final authority over any questionable or disallowed claim or special claim beyond allowances set in the approved plan.

V. LOCAL CHURCH FINANCE MINIMUM STANDARDS

Serving as a financial officer or in a financially related position within a local church requires that we serve with fiduciary responsibility over the financial matters of the church. This fiduciary responsibility means that we stand in service to perform our duties with the trust and confidence that we act for the benefit of the church and not for the benefit or convenience of ourselves. As we serve with these responsibilities in local churches, we are guided to provide the most effective and most efficient ways to safeguard the assets entrusted to our care. One of the ways we safeguard the assets is to put procedures in place that have been proven to minimize risks by preventing and detecting error, deterring fraud and protecting innocent staff and volunteers. The following guidelines have been developed in order to assist those with financial responsibilities in local churches to identify and implement basic internal control procedures. These guidelines are intended to aid in the prevention or deterrence of fraudulent behavior and are not accusations that fraudulent activities are being performed. These guidelines provide protection for those in a position of controlling financial activity from being accused of fraud. Part of the fulfillment of our calling to be good stewards of the Lord's funds is having effective procedures in place to safeguard those funds. These minimum standards should be increased for churches with higher volumes of transactions but should not be compromised for lower volumes of transactions. All local churches are expected to meet these minimum standards.

A. Receipts and Disbursements

1. Treasurer and Financial Secretary should not be the same person and should not be in the same immediate family residing in the same household
2. Counting team (at least two unrelated persons) should count offerings and document totals - not treasurer and not financial secretary
3. Offerings should be deposited the same or next business day
4. Offering count details should be given to financial secretary for recording
5. Offering totals should be given to the treasurer or financial secretary to record deposit
6. The Financial Secretary's deposit log should be compared to the bank statement to verify deposits (by bank reconciliation reviewer)
7. At least two persons should be listed as authorized signatures on all accounts

CFA: Proposed 2013 Budget

June 2011 - NCCC Advocate

Page 11

To be raised January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012

Row #	Ministry Teams	Shortfall for 2010	Approved Request 2009 Raised 2010 for 2011	UNAUDITED Actual Raised 2010 for 2011	Shortfall for 2011	Requested Request 2010 Raised 2011 for 2012	Requested Request 2011 Raised 2012 for 2013	Increase (Decrease)	0.00% % Increase (Decr)	% of Total Apport
1	** World Service	\$137,141	\$1,976,647	\$1,829,451	\$147,196	\$2,013,941	\$1,961,235	(\$52,706)	-2.62%	9.64%
	Outreach Ministry Team									
2	Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries	819	11,400	10,551	849	11,400	13,450	\$2,050	17.98%	0.07%
3	Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries	2,094	30,000	27,766	2,234	30,000	30,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
4	Disaster Response	698	16,200	14,994	1,206	5,000	10,000	\$5,000	100.00%	0.05%
5	Asbury Homes Inc.	-	-	-	-	-	5,000	\$5,000	100.00%	0.02%
6	Methodist Home for Children	13,262	190,000	175,851	14,149	200,000	200,000	-	0.00%	0.98%
7	Methodist Retirement Homes	13,960	200,000	185,106	14,894	200,000	200,000	-	0.00%	0.98%
8	Golden Cross Fund	1,050	15,050	13,929	1,121	15,050	15,100	\$50	0.33%	0.07%
9	Missions and Outreach	32,079	492,220	455,565	36,655	492,220	491,600	(\$620)	-0.13%	2.42%
10	Refugee & Immigration	768	11,000	10,181	819	16,000	8,000	(\$8,000)	-50.00%	0.04%
11	Board of Institutions	35	500	463	37	500	750	\$250	50.00%	0.00%
12	Disability Concerns	244	4,700	4,350	350	2,000	2,350	\$350	17.50%	0.01%
	Subtotal - Outreach Ministry Team	\$65,009	\$971,070	\$898,757	\$72,313	\$972,170	\$976,250	\$4,080	0.42%	4.80%
	Christian Formation Team									
13	Evangelism	\$3,141	\$99,955	\$92,512	\$7,443	\$99,955	\$95,600	(\$4,355)	-4.36%	0.47%
14	Church & Society	593	12,600	11,662	938	15,000	12,250	(\$2,750)	-18.33%	0.06%
15	Spiritual Life	454	12,800	11,847	953	13,000	13,000	-	0.00%	0.06%
16	Worship	279	5,200	4,813	387	5,200	5,200	-	0.00%	0.03%
17	Higher Education and Campus Ministries	349	7,000	6,479	521	7,000	7,000	-	0.00%	0.03%
18	** College Chaplaincy Support Fund	19,194	275,000	254,521	20,479	275,000	275,000	-	0.00%	1.35%
19	College Chaplaincy Support - Reserve	4,799	68,750	63,630	5,120	68,750	68,750	-	0.00%	0.34%
20	Campus Ministry	33,154	501,400	464,062	37,338	501,000	501,000	-	0.00%	2.46%
21	Youth Ministry	3,788	60,300	55,810	4,490	60,300	60,300	-	0.00%	0.30%
22	Young Adults	283	4,050	3,748	302	4,050	4,000	(\$50)	-1.23%	0.02%
23	Children's Ministries	1,222	19,450	18,002	1,448	19,450	19,450	-	0.00%	0.10%
24	Older Adults	419	6,000	5,553	447	6,000	7,000	\$1,000	16.67%	0.03%
25	Education and Nurture	157	3,200	2,962	238	3,200	3,200	-	0.00%	0.02%
26	Camp & Retreat Min Inc.	19,194	275,000	254,521	20,479	275,000	275,000	-	0.00%	1.35%
27	Emerging Church Support	43,195	823,419	762,101	61,318	854,200	854,200	-	0.00%	4.20%
28	New Faith Communities Sal & Ben	14,672	226,578	209,705	16,873	226,578	229,977	\$3,399	1.50%	1.13%
29	New Faith Communities Office	4,110	63,000	58,309	4,691	64,200	64,200	-	0.00%	0.32%
30	Archives & History - Realigned to Stewardsh	481	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	Conference Media Center -Realigned	349	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Subtotal - Christian Formation Team	\$149,832	\$2,463,702	\$2,280,236	\$183,466	\$2,497,883	\$2,495,127	(\$2,756)	-0.11%	12.26%
	Leadership Team									
32	Multicultural Ministries Team	\$602	\$18,450	\$17,076	\$1,374	\$8,000	\$14,000	\$6,000	75.00%	0.07%
33	Multicultural Ministries Grants	3,490	50,000	46,277	3,723	50,000	50,000	-	0.00%	0.25%
34	Multicultural Ministries Program	6,418	112,620	104,233	8,387	135,770	113,800	(\$21,970)	-16.18%	0.56%
35	Hispanic/Latino Ministries Office	886	12,700	11,754	946	-	-	-	0.00%	0.00%
36	Monitoring & Accountability	258	3,700	3,424	276	4,950	3,550	(\$1,400)	-28.28%	0.02%
37	** Ministerial Education Fund	47,432	676,660	626,271	50,389	680,358	650,701	(\$29,657)	-4.36%	3.20%
38	Board of Ordained / Diaconal Ministry	12,299	190,700	176,499	14,201	195,500	212,000	\$16,500	8.44%	1.04%
39	BODM: Sexual Ethics Programs	1,527	21,875	20,246	1,629	18,000	18,000	-	0.00%	0.09%
40	Seminary Visitation	140	2,000	1,851	149	4,000	5,000	\$1,000	25.00%	0.02%
41	Bishop's Days Apart	558	8,000	7,404	596	8,000	9,000	\$1,000	12.50%	0.04%
42	Laity	1,912	28,000	25,915	2,085	28,000	28,000	-	0.00%	0.14%
43	Episcopacy	84	1,200	1,111	89	1,200	1,200	-	0.00%	0.01%
44	District Supt. Fund: Salaries & Pen. Ben.	104,493	1,549,470	1,434,084	115,386	1,514,035	1,528,686	\$14,651	0.97%	7.51%
45	District Supt. Fund: Travel	7,259	104,000	96,255	7,745	104,000	109,000	\$5,000	4.81%	0.54%
46	Dist. Supt. Fund: Cabinet Exp.	2,626	40,000	37,021	2,979	40,000	40,000	-	0.00%	0.20%
47	Cabinet Discretionary Fund	349	5,000	4,628	372	5,000	5,000	-	0.00%	0.02%
48	Bishop's Discretionary Fund	140	2,000	1,851	149	2,000	2,000	-	0.00%	0.01%
49	Ministerial Relations Office-Sal & Benefits	23,220	343,459	317,882	25,577	343,459	348,611	\$5,152	1.50%	1.71%
50	Ministerial Relations Office	1,427	24,000	22,213	1,787	24,500	24,500	-	0.00%	0.12%
51	Christian Unity	489	7,000	6,479	521	7,000	7,000	-	0.00%	0.03%
52	NC Council of Churches	1,256	18,000	16,660	1,340	18,000	18,000	-	0.00%	0.09%
53	Office of the Bishop	2,155	31,000	28,692	2,308	31,000	31,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
54	Effective Ministry Program	1,745	25,000	23,138	1,862	25,000	25,000	-	0.00%	0.12%
55	Conference Staff Relations Comm	91	1,300	1,203	97	1,300	1,300	-	0.00%	0.01%
56	Nominations	35	1,000	926	74	2,000	1,000	(\$1,000)	-50.00%	0.00%
57	CM Task Forces	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00%	0.00%
	Subtotal - Leadership Team	\$220,891	\$3,277,134	\$3,033,093	\$244,041	\$3,251,072	\$3,246,348	(\$4,724)	-0.15%	15.96%
	Stewardship Team									
58	Stewardship	\$865	\$13,250	\$12,263	\$987	\$13,250	\$15,000	\$1,750	13.21%	0.07%
59	Annual Conf. Expense	11,168	178,000	164,745	13,255	200,000	200,000	-	0.00%	0.98%
60	Annual Conf. Registrar Sal & Ben	279	4,000	3,702	298	4,000	4,000	-	0.00%	0.02%
61	Conf. Secretary's Office	1,256	18,500	17,122	1,378	19,000	19,000	-	0.00%	0.09%
62	Conf. Secretary's Office Sal & Ben	6,142	91,080	84,297	6,785	91,080	92,446	\$1,366	1.50%	0.45%
63	Conference Journal/Printing	2,094	40,000	37,021	2,979	40,000	35,000	(\$5,000)	-12.50%	0.17%
64	Communications	5,933	90,000	83,298	6,702	88,500	88,500	-	0.00%	0.43%
65	Publications: NC Conference Advocate	4,195	57,700	53,403	4,297	30,000	30,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
66	** General Administration	15,281	214,172	198,223	15,949	219,762	223,993	\$4,231	1.93%	1.10%
67	** SEJ Mission & Ministry	10,706	153,388	141,966	11,422	153,388	153,391	\$3	0.00%	0.75%
68	Conf. Treasurer's Office Sal & Ben	45,393	673,105	622,980	50,125	673,105	744,102	\$70,997	10.55%	3.66%
69	Conf. Treasurer's Office	15,881	217,860	201,636	16,224	217,860	197,860	(\$20,000)	-9.18%	0.97%
70	Treasurer Bonding & Insurance	579	10,790	9,986	804	10,790	10,790	-	0.00%	0.05%
71	Information Management Office	5,005	74,300	68,767	5,533	74,300	74,300	-	0.00%	0.37%
72	Information Management Sal & Ben	13,683	202,899	187,790	15,109	202,899	205,942	\$3,043	1.50%	1.01%
73	Conf. Board of Trustees	112	1,750	1,620	130	1,750	1,750	-	0.00%	0.01%
74	Contingency Fund	1,047	15,000	13,883	1,117	15,000	15,000	-	0.00%	0.07%
75	** Meth. Bldg. Operating Fund	11,866	175,000	161,968	13,032	175,000	175,000	-	0.00%	0.86%
76	** Meth. Bldg. Capital Fund	13,960	200,000	185,106	14,894	200,000	200,000	-	0.00%	0.98%
77	Episcopal Residence	1,047	15,000	13,883	1,117	15,000	15,000	-	0.00%	0.07%
78	Staff Housing	3,734	110,671	102,430	8,241	111,047	84,760	(\$26,287)	-23.67%	0.42%
79	Legal Counsel	1,396	20,000	18,511	1,489	20,000	20,000	-	0.00%	0.10%
80	Equitable Compensation	8,725	125,000	115,692	9,308	125,000	130,000	\$5,000	4.00%	0.64%
81	Minister's Moving Expense	12,913	185,000	171,223	13,777	185,000	185,000	-	0.00%	0.91%
82	Joint Comm. on Incapacity	29,036	461,058	426,724	34,334	461,058	440,000	(\$21,058)	-4.57%	2.16%
83	Conf. Claimants -Retiree Insurance	188,455	2,700,000	2,498,937	201,063	2,700,000	2,700,000	-	0.00%	13.27%
84	In-coming WATS	272	4,200	3,887	313	4,200	4,200	-	0.00%	0.02%
85	General and Jurisdictional Conference	3,699	30,000	27,766	2,234	30,000	30,000	-	0.00%	0.15%
86	Archives & History - 2011 Realignment	-	7,650	7,080	570	7,650	7,725	\$75	0.98%	0.04%
87	Conference Media Center - 2011 Realignment	-	6,300	5,831	469	6,300	6,375	\$75	1.19%	0.03%
88	CCM Office Meetings & Cong. Revitalization	8,149	120,250	111,295	8,955	120,250	128,250	\$8,000	6.65%	0.63%
89	CCM Staff Salaries and Benefits	77,191	1,145,000	1,059,734	85,266	1,145,000	1,162,175	\$17,175	1.50%	5.71%
	Subtotal - Stewardship Team	\$500,062	\$7,360,923	\$6,812,772	\$548,151	\$7,360,189	\$7,399,559	\$39,370	0.53%	36.37%
	Conference Connectional Ministries	\$935,794	\$14,072,829	\$13,024,858	\$1,047,972	\$14,081,314	\$14,117,284	\$35,970	0.26%	69.39%
90	World Service & Connectional Ministries	\$1,072,936	\$16,049,476	\$14,854,308	\$1,195,168	\$16,095,255	\$16,078,519	(\$16,736)	-0.10%	79.03%
	Past Service Liability									
91	** Past Service Liability-Pensions	\$190,833	\$3,300,000	\$3,063,390	\$236,610	\$3,300,000	\$3,300,000	-	0.00%	16.22%
	Other General Conference									
92	** Episcopal Fund	\$23,168.36	\$543,697	\$517,675	\$26,022	\$565,233	\$597,400	\$32,167	5.69%	2.94%
93	** Africa University Fund	3,672	60,416	56,548	3,868	60,738	58,086	(\$2,652)	-4.37%	0.29%
94	** Black College Fund	17,017	269,946	250,630	19,316	271,383	259,535	(\$11,848)	-4.37%	1.28%
95	** Interdenominational Coop.Fund	3,490	52,664	49,166	3,498	53,016	51,507	(\$1,509)	-2.85%	0.25%
96	Total Other General Apportionments	\$47,347	\$926,723	\$874,019	\$52,704	\$950,370	\$966,5			

Committee on Finance & Administration Report - from page 10

8. Financial policy and authority guidelines should be written and approved by the Finance Committee (there is a template available on the Conference Treasurer's Office website).
 9. Invoices should be required for all payments from all accounts
 10. Someone other than the treasurer (with authority by Finance Committee) should approve invoices for payment
 11. Typically, the Treasurer should make payments only after the invoice is approved. A policy may be implemented where routine, budgeted expenses (i.e., rent/mortgage, electric bill, etc.) may be paid without recurring approval; non-routine expenses must be approved prior to payment.
- B. Reporting and Review
1. All accounts should be reconciled monthly
 2. Someone other than treasurer should review bank reconciliation at least semiannually – including bank statements, invoices, checks written, and financial reports
 3. The Treasurer should make detailed report of budget and designated fund activities to the Finance Committee at least quarterly
 4. There must be an annual evaluation of financial records – at least in as much detail as the Local Church Audit Guide (completed by **August 1** for preceding year) – including ALL accounts of the church (except UMW may be under separate evaluation or audit) – ALL accounts includes the general fund, building funds, designated accounts, cemetery funds, discretionary funds, Sunday school accounts, etc.
 5. An external annual audit of ALL accounts should be done at least every three years for churches with **total annual disbursements** of more than \$500,000 per year (completed by **August 1** for preceding year). An annual evaluation should be performed during the interim years.
 6. While a full audit is optimal, the term 'external audit' could mean a review by a CPA firm or other qualified individual (one with an accounting degree and accounting experience) that is independent of the church's Finance Committee or church council.
 7. An external annual audit of ALL accounts should be done every year for churches with **total annual disbursements** of more than \$1,000,000 per year (completed by **August 1** for preceding year). The term 'external audit' in this recommendation refers to an audit by an independent CPA or firm—not a member of the church. An opinion is given on the financial statements—both balance sheet and income statement.
 8. For NC licensing purposes, if an individual CPA performs an audit, they must be a member of the church's audit committee performing the audit, thereby a member of an audit team reporting to the Finance Committee.
- C. Tax Reporting Requirements
1. W-2s must be issued for employees, including pastors, and 1099s issued for non-employee compensation by January 31 for preceding year (federal law requirement)
 2. Payroll tax forms and deposits done as required for payroll amount (federal law requirement) – payroll reporting should be completed for the IRS and SSA by appropriate due date for filing method
 3. Housing allowance or exclusions approved annually at charge conference and kept on file (federal law requirement)
- D. Other General Requirements
1. Prepare list of all church property for insurance purposes – include item description, serial number and value
 2. Prepare list of safety deposit box contents – update authority as needed – access should be allowed by two unrelated people
 3. Computer records are backed up and password protected for security
 4. Ideally, four individuals are required for regular financial procedures: financial secretary, treasurer, person to review and approve invoices and person to review bank reconciliations. It is possible for this to be accomplished with 3 individuals if proper segregation is achieved.

VI. APPROVAL TO SOLICIT FUNDS

Any organization designated as a Conference Advance Special may ask local churches to consider opportunities for giving. It shall be at the discretion of the local church as to whether, when and how these opportunities will be presented to the membership. Solicitation or private campaign may not be taken directly into local churches of the Conference through solicitation in classes or other groups or by the use of membership lists (either partial or in entirety).

Approval is given to the requests of the following agencies and programs for the privilege of soliciting funds under these policies throughout the District or Conference.

- A. Christmas Offering for District programs and/or projects.
- B. The Commission on Congregational Development for the promotion of the Church Extension Ten Dollar Club and the John Wesley Endowment for Congregational Development.
- C. The Board of Directors for Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc. to solicit from church groups and individuals, materials and money for specific projects for the three camps of the North Carolina Conference.
- D. Methodist Retirement Homes, Incorporated; Methodist Home for Children;

Louisburg College; Methodist College; North Carolina Wesleyan College; and Asbury Homes for the privilege of private solicitation and receipt of such funds as may be directed thereto.

- E. The United Methodist Foundation, Incorporated, as provided in its charter.
- F. The Disaster Response Committee upon joint decision of the committee and the Resident Bishop to respond to disasters within the bounds of the NC Annual Conference.

The CFA continues to recommend that 100% "Missional Service Giving" be the on-going priority. The Council also recommends that stewardship continue to be a missional focus, Conference priority.

VII. DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS' SALARY

The Council on Finance and Administration recommends that the formula for computing the annual salary for the district superintendents be the average of the top 25 pastors' salaries in the Conference for the previous year. Salary is defined as cash salary plus nonvouchered allowances. **We recommend the 2012 salary for district superintendents be set at \$103,171.**

VIII. ORGANIZATION and PROCEDURE

(presented for information only)

- A. **The audit for 2010 will be by McGladrey & Pullen, Raleigh, NC.**
- B. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer of the CFA shall serve as the executive committee of the Council. The Council shall elect two additional members to the executive committee from its voting membership.
- C. The Conference treasurer will include in the monthly financial reports, for any given month, all monies received in the office by 8:30 a.m. on the 5th day of the following month, except when the 5th day falls on a weekend or holiday the report will include the funds received by 8:30 a.m. on the following workday.
- D. The treasurer may approve minor overexpenditures of a budget line item up to \$5,000 or 5% of the line item, whichever is less. A request for such overexpenditure shall be submitted in writing in advance and shall state the reason for the request. The overexpenditure will be reported to CFA and will be listed in the Conference Journal.
- E. Any Conference or non-conference agency which receives financial support from Conference funds or from any authorized conference-wide appeal in excess of \$5,000 shall submit, with any budget request, an annual detailed audited budget report of all receipts, disbursements and assets. A statement in effect that "All funds granted have been spent consistent with the social principles of The United Methodist Church" will be furnished to CFA upon submission of the audit. Such reports received may be reported in whole or in summary form in the Conference *Journal* and shall remain on file in the treasurer's office. An agency may be exempted (for just cause) from this reporting requirement by CFA. Note: CFA requests the Board of Institutions to provide regular reports (at least annually) regarding its financial monitoring of related institutions/programs. The financial monitoring shall include consideration of a final independent audit for the institution, pension plan and affiliated entities, including journal entries, the auditor's management letter and any other reports of the auditors; liability insurance coverage levels; and the institution's projected budget for any subsequent fiscal years, including the current fiscal year.
- F. A carry-over of budgeted funds remaining (not including any supplemental appropriations) of up to 10% of the amount raised for the subsequent year will be allowed for Conference budget line items. Any carryover or portion thereof by this policy may be rescinded in any year in which funds are not available to meet basic ministry needs as determined by the CFA.
- G. Funds appropriated to a board or agency must be spent in the calendar year of the appropriation unless otherwise allowed.
- H. Supplemental Appropriations: The Council will consider requests for supplemental appropriations in the following priority order:

First Priority

 - Salary and benefit items previously approved according to the policies of the Annual Conference or General Conference (i.e. Equitable Compensation Funds, staff salaries, etc.)
 - Programs authorized and mandated by the NC Annual Conference which are not included in the Annual Conference budget for that financial year.
 - Amounts required by the Past Service Funding Plan adopted jointly by the Board of Pensions and the CFA which are not raised by the Board of Pensions annual budget requests.

Second Priority

 - New creative programs to respond to emerging needs and to expand the mission of the Annual Conference which are not included in the Conference budget for that year. Such programs will be funded through supplemental appropriations only on a short-term basis.
 - Emergency needs and programs in the life of the boards and agencies of the Annual Conference. The petitioning group shall make such requests in writing to the treasurer's office at least 15 working days before a scheduled CFA meeting.

Committee on Finance & Administration Report - from page 12

Third Priority

- Any other type of funding requests.

Procedure for seeking supplemental appropriations:

1. All requests for supplemental appropriations shall be made to the CFA President and/or the Conference Treasurer's office in writing at least 15 working days before a scheduled CFA meeting.
 2. The normal procedure for requests for supplemental appropriations will be a review by the CFA supplemental appropriations committee which will make a recommendation to the full Council.
 3. If an emergency request for supplemental appropriations is received between scheduled meetings, the CFA supplemental appropriations committee will consider the request and direct the Conference treasurer to forward it to the membership via mail or e-mail with a recommendation for action.
- I. Interest shall be paid to/from the Board of Pensions, Insurance Fund, Blackburn Scholarship Fund, Church Extension Redevelopment, and Church Extension Salary Endowment funds using the rate of the conference interest bearing checking account, compounded monthly, on monthly average balances held by the Conference treasurer.
- J. Retroactive adjustments for transfer or posting delays will be made to the Board of Pensions and the Insurance Fund accounts for earnings calculations.
- K. Funds in excess of operational needs for the Board of Pensions and the Insurance fund are invested in the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. of the N.C. Conference, the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits or other socially balanced investment funds as deemed appropriate by the Council.
- L. In order to prevent a loss of funds due to investment risk, and in order to have funds available for emergency use, the goal of the Council is to maintain minimum reserve funds equal to 15% of the current operating budget for World Service and Connectional Ministries and the Past Service Liability. Supplemental appropriations from current year earnings shall follow the guidelines in paragraph H above. Supplemental appropriations beyond current year earnings shall follow the following guidelines: 1. If reserves are less than or equal to 20% of the current operating budget, then only supplements to meet payroll for existing positions may be considered. 2. If reserves are above 20% and below 30% of operating budget, then only supplements to meet payroll for existing positions, ministries and unfunded liabilities may be considered. 3. If reserves are equal to or greater than 30% of operating budget, then other requests may be considered. 4. No request may be considered if the amount requested would reduce reserves below 15% of operating budget.
- M. Mailing address labels will be available for a nominal fee to conference agencies, clergy and lay members of Annual Conference or other United Methodists for church-related uses.
- N. **CFA Meeting Schedule:** The executive committee meets at the call of the President. Scheduled meetings are:
June 2011: There may be a called meeting in conjunction with Annual Conference if necessary to elect officers or conduct other business.
September 6, 2011: An optional meeting to be held if necessary to consider general business matters.
November 1, 2011: An optional meeting to be held if necessary at the call of the President.
December 6, 2011: To consider apportionment matters and supplemental appropriations for salaries.
January 20, 2012: To look at the shortfall and make a decision regarding paying out the general church apportionments. *(Subject to change based on GCFA final closing date.)*
February 7, 2012: To consider the operating budget for the current year. All payments on apportionments are due to the Treasurer by mid January. A report of receipts, amounts allocated to the budgeted boards and agencies, and supplemental appropriations are decided at the meeting.
March 6, 2012: To consider the budget to be recommended to Annual Conference which will be raised in the subsequent year and spent in the year following that. Additionally, the CFA policy recommendations to the Annual Conference are adopted.
- O. **Dates to Remember:**
July 15, 2011: Apportionments sent to the Districts.
December 1, 2011: Requests for the 2014 budget, to be adopted at the 2012 Annual Conference, due in the Treasurer's Office.
November 2, 2011: Requests for supplemental appropriations for the 2011 operating budget due in the treasurer's office.
January 18, 2012: Annual Conference and General Church remittances must be received by 8:30 A.M. in order to receive credit for 2011. *(Subject to change based on GCFA final closing date.)*
January 20, 2012: Requests for supplemental appropriations for the 2012 operating budget due in the treasurer's office.
January 31, 2012: Tables I, II and III due to the Conference statistician.

IX. UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP), and UMLifeOptions

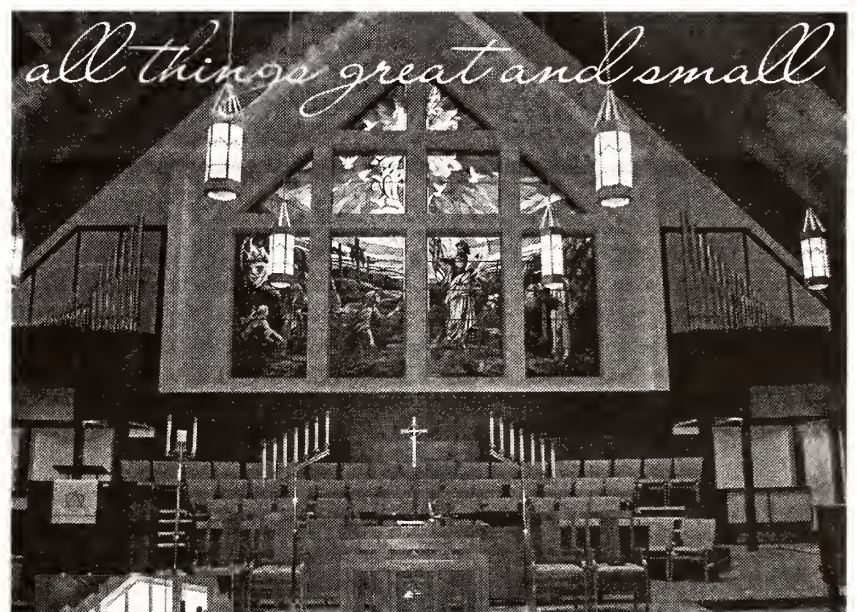
A. GENERAL

1. The lay employee's supervisor is responsible for making lay employees aware of these rules and procedures. Detailed information on the

UMPIP and the UMLifeOptions is available from the treasurer's office. Supervisors will have lay employees who are eligible for these benefits contact the treasurer's office 60 days before they are eligible for participation, or sign a waiver form if they decline to participate in the UMPIP. The form will be kept on file in the treasurer's office for future reference.

2. The Conference treasurer's office will administer the UMPIP and the UMLifeOptions.
 3. Contributions will be withheld from the employees pay and remitted to the General Board of Pensions by the treasurer's office within ten business days after receiving the bill from the General Board of Pensions.
- B. UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP - Effective January 1, 2006)
1. The lay employee must be full time (at least 20 hours per week).
 2. The lay employee must be an employee for 1 continuous year before becoming eligible for UMPIP.
 3. The conference contribution will be twelve percent (12%) of the employee's base compensation.
 4. The lay employee's required contribution will be 3% of the employee's base compensation. Participants in the UMPIP must be participants in the UMLifeOptions.
- C. UMLifeOptions
1. The UMLifeOptions plan is a death and disability plan for lay employees.
 2. UMLifeOptions is an employer funded plan and, as such, is required enrollment for all eligible employees.
 3. Employees are eligible after one year of employment working at least 20 hours per week.

Danny Allen, President



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Board of Pensions: Report B

Recommendations for the Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits

Please note: Listed below is the full Board of Pension Report B which has numerous recommended changes requiring a vote.

I. Funding Plan for Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program

A. **Defined Plan Benefits:** Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (Pre-82 Plan) provides defined benefit pension benefits to participating retired clergy for all service rendered to the North Carolina Conference through December 31, 1981. This plan will continue until all pastors with past service benefits and their surviving spouses are deceased and is administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB).

B. **Current Past Service Rate:** For many years, the Book of Discipline has defined Pre-82 Plan defined benefits as a fixed payment per year of past service. This fixed payment is the Past Service Rate (PSR). The benefit goal is stated to be a PSR of 1% of the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). Participation in the Clergy Retirement Security Program requires that an Annual Conference maintain its PSR to at least 0.9% of the CAC. The **2011** CAC for the North Carolina Conference is **\$67,702**. The **2011** PSR is **\$639** or **0.94%** of the CAC. Our Conference Board would like to maintain a PSR of at least 0.9% of CAC. North Carolina CAC has increased by an average of 3.75% per year over the past 10 years. We estimate future PSR increases to average approximately 5.0% each year.

C. **Funded Status:** The Conference is required to fund all future benefits of the Pre-82 Plan by December 31, 2021. Funded Status (previously called unfunded liability) is the difference of the current assets held by the GBOPHB for future benefits of North Carolina participants and the total present value of all future benefits to be paid under the plan at the approved PSR. The GBOPHB values assets and liabilities of the plan every two years and projects data to current years based on the increase in PSR and investment earnings. For the **2011** Funding Plan, GBOPHB and the Conference use an assumed earnings rate of 7.0%.

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits has determined that the portion of the pre-82 plan liability attributable to North Carolina Annual Conference is **\$49,542,875** with a 5.0% PSR increase assumption based on a **2011** PSR of **\$639**. Plan funds currently held with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits have a value of **\$14,040,070** as of January 1, **2009** (for **2011** funding plan).

The difference between the total plan liability and current plan funding is **\$35,502,805**. This represents the unfunded plan liability and will be provided through apportionments and non-plan funds that are held in various investment sources. The Conference intends for contributions to be made within the **11-year** period, ending December 31, 2021. The minimum annual contribution due December 31, **2011** is currently estimated to be **\$3,507,326**.

D. **Funding Plan for 2011:** Our conference pays for plan benefits through several potential funding sources. Both the interest and principal of non-plan funds may be available for retirement funding needs. Below is a description of the non-plan assets available to pay the present value of future contributions. Our Conference expects to utilize annual apportionments from the local churches as the primary source for pre-82 pension funding. Our Conference expects to receive annual apportionments in an amount of \$3,300,000 for **2011 through 2013**, then increasing \$200,000 each year through **2017**. Apportionments of **\$4,200,000** are expected for the year **2018**. The present value of the expected apportionments is **\$19,236,835**. This apportionment funding was originally approved by the 1991 Annual Conference.

The Conference maintains a General Deposit Account with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits that has a value of **\$13,983,170** as of January 1, **2011**. Both the interest and principal from this account are available to meet future contribution requirements.

The Conference maintains and manages various liquid asset accounts that are available for Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program funding. The current value of these accounts are **\$2,139,170** as of January 1, **2011**. Both the interest and principal from these sources are available to meet future contribution requirements.

The Superannuate Endowment fund has a value of **\$394,899** as of January 1, **2011**. All of it is available except for the original balance of \$87,195.39, from which interest only is available.

The **2011** funding plan as of January 1, **2009** is summarized below: Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program funding Liability:

Assuming A PSR Increase of 5.0% **\$49,542,875**
Current Plan Funding as of **1/1/09** **\$14,040,070**
Unfunded Plan Liability as of **1/1/09** **\$35,502,805**
Projected Unfunded Plan Liability as of **1/1/11** **\$35,378,259**

Additional Plan Assets:

Present Value of Future Apportionments. **\$19,236,835**
General Deposit Account (GBOPHB) **\$13,983,170**

Conference Managed Liquid Asset Accounts **\$2,139,170**
Conference Superannuate Endowment Fund (GBOPHB) **\$394,899**
Total Additional Plan Assets. **\$35,754,074**

Proposed Past Service Rate: The **2012** CAC for the North Carolina Conference is **\$68,278**. We propose that the past service rate beginning January 1, **2012** be increased to remain at **\$639** per service year, or **0.94%** of the CAC. Assuming 5% future PSR increases and 7.0% investment earnings, this increase creates an unfunded liability of **\$11,069,441**. The minimum annual contribution due December 31, **2012** is currently estimated to be **\$3,049,855**.

II. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) (effective through December 31, 2006)

Guidelines for the Ministerial Pension Plan and the Comprehensive Protection Plan are contained in the plan document. A copy of the summary plan document is available on request by contacting pension services in the treasurer's office.

- A. Service on and after January 1, 1982 through December 31, 2006 was funded on a defined contribution basis. This plan is basically deferred salary, and creates no unfunded liability because it builds an account of funds for a specific minister as his/her salary is paid.
- B. These contributions were placed in the individual minister's Church Account to be available for benefits when the minister becomes eligible for payment in the retired relationship.
- C. Each minister who is eligible for benefits will be required to designate beneficiaries for the benefits he/she is qualified to receive.

III. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) (Effective January 1, 2007)

Guidelines for the Clergy Retirement Security Program and the Comprehensive Protection Plan are contained in the plan document. A copy of the summary plan document is available on request by contacting pension services in the treasurer's office. Service on and after January 1, 2007 will be funded on a combined defined contribution/defined benefit basis.

A. Defined Benefit

- 1. The Defined Benefit will be 1.25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) according to the plan document.
- 2. The Defined Benefit portion will be funded based on a percentage of Plan Compensation calculated on a yearly basis using up to the normal cost rate provided by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits multiplied by the annual interest rate. The current assumed interest rate is 7.0%. Therefore, the funding percentage rate for **2012** is 10.4% of Plan Compensation.

B. Defined Contribution

- 1. Benefits will be provided based on the participant's account balance at their actual retirement date.
- 2. The Defined Contribution portion funding is based on three percent (3%) of Plan Compensation.

C. Plan Compensation is calculated by the GBOPHB according to the plan document:

- 1. Vouchered travel and utilities paid directly to utility companies are not used in Plan Compensation calculations since this is considered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to be local church expense.
- 2. Clergy couples housing:
 - a. When only one of the spouses is furnished a parsonage, the one furnished the parsonage includes the housing allowance.
 - b. When one spouse is furnished the parsonage and the other a cash allowance, the one furnished the parsonage will use the 25% housing allowance and the other will report the actual cash housing paid.
 - c. When two parsonages are furnished each spouse claims a housing allowance.
 - d. When neither is furnished a parsonage, the actual cash housing allowance may be counted by the person/or persons receiving the allowance.
- 3. In accordance with the plan document, the housing allowance for those furnished housing is 25% times the cash salary.
- 4. Those furnished a cash housing allowance will report the actual amount in accordance with the plan document.

D. The Clergy Retirement Security Program contribution from the local church is to be paid monthly by the Church or Charge Treasurer to the Conference Treasurer's Office.

E. The Defined Contribution portions are placed in the individual minister's Church Account to be available for benefits when the minister becomes eligible for payment in the retired relationship.

F. Each minister who is eligible for benefits will be required to designate beneficiaries for the benefits he/she is qualified to receive.

Pensions: Report B - Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits from page 14

IV. Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

- A. This part of the program contains provisions for a death benefit and disability income. In addition to the provisions of a death benefit for the pastor, there is a death benefit on the life of the spouse and dependent children under age 18 or who are dependent because of disability. The Comprehensive Protection Plan also includes educational benefits for the children of a deceased minister. This part of the plan is only available to those ministers covered under the CPP, whose charges are paying at least minimum full-time salary.

1. Death Benefits provide \$50,000.00 as the benefit paid on the death of an eligible active participant. Upon retirement at any age, death benefits drop to **\$18,514.80 for the year 2011** and **\$18,834.30 for 2012**. This is 30% of the DAC. **The death benefit payable upon the death of a spouse of an active or retired participant is \$12,343.20 for 2011 and \$12,556.20 for 2012. This is 20% of the DAC. The death benefit payable upon the death of a surviving spouse of a deceased active or retired participant is \$9,257.40 for 2011 and \$9,417.15 for 2012. This is 15% of the DAC.**

2. Effective January 1, 2002, the disability benefit equals 70% of plan compensation, with plan compensation capped at 200% of the DAC. (The DAC for **2011** is **\$61,716** and for **2012** is **\$62,781**) The disability benefit is reduced by any disability benefits payable under the Social Security Act. This revised benefit applies only to eligible clergy whose disability effective date, as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, is on or after January 1, 2002.

3. The Comprehensive Protection Plan contribution from the local church is to be paid monthly by the Church or Charge Treasurer to the Conference Treasurer's Office. (Effective November 1, 2004)

4. Pastors who have been approved for a leave of absence for military service and who were enrolled in the CPP prior to the date of their leave will continue to be enrolled in the CPP under optional Conference enrollment.

- B. Effective January 1, 2007, the cost of the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) will be funded by billing up to the calculated percentage to fund the CPP each year using the rate required by the General Board of Pension. For **2011** the cost is a total of 3% of the actual Plan Compensation up to 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). The pastor shall be required to pay 1% of Plan Compensation (up to 1% of 200% of DAC) on an after tax basis and the church or charge shall pay 2% of the Plan Compensation (up to 2% of 200% of DAC). ¶1506.19 in The Book of Discipline 2008.

- C. Per action by the General Board of Pension the CPP premiums will be redirected to fund the liabilities of other components of the pension plan for 2011 through 2013.

V. Implementation of the Program

The benefit program adopted by your Conference Board of Pensions seeks to provide a wider range of support for the minister's family through death benefits for every member of the family, disability income for the minister in time of great stress, educational benefits for children of deceased ministers, minimum annuity benefits for surviving spouses, and clergy benefits based on the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC).

- A. Costs of the Clergy Retirement Security Program/Comprehensive Protection Plan will be borne by the local charge as an item of ministerial support according to the Plan Compensation of the minister and the category of the charge.

1. Effective January 1, 2007

FULL TIME (Conference Member/Local Pastor) - 10.4% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Benefit portion and 3% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Contribution portion and 2% of Plan Compensation for CPP (up to 2% of 200% of the DAC)

STUDENT (Conference Member/Local Pastor) 10.4% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Benefit portion and 3% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Contribution portion

LESS THAN FULL TIME (Conference Member/Local Pastor) 10.4% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Benefit portion and 3% of Plan Compensation for CRSP - Defined Contribution portion

INTERIM OR RETIRED SUPPLY no pension responsibility

- B. Effective January 1, 2007 Deacons and Probationary Deacons serving in Episcopal appointments to a local church or other entity that falls under the pension plan sponsorship of the Conference shall be enrolled in the plans according to the plan document.

- C. The pastor will make regular monthly payments to the Conference Treasurer's Office through the local church treasurer for his/her 1% of Plan Compensation (up to 1% of 200% of the DAC) on an after tax basis for CPP.

- D. It is recommended that the pastor make regular monthly payments through the local church treasurer to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for his/her personal taxpaid or taxdeferred contributions of at least 3%.

(The following, Item VI, was approved by the 1997 Annual Conference to be

placed in effect at the conclusion of the Session of the Annual Conference, Year 2000:)

VI. Policies Related to Life and Health Insurance

- A. The 2010 budget needed to fund health and life insurance, pension grants, administration, etc., is \$2,700,000.

B. Eligibility Policies

1. Five-Year Rule: A participant must be covered in the Conference insurance plan for five consecutive and uninterrupted years immediately prior to the date of retirement in order to retain insurance benefits after retirement.
2. Clergy persons who retire from the North Carolina Annual Conference with twenty or more full time years of earned pension credit in the North Carolina Annual Conference may receive life and health insurance benefits when the clergy person attains age 62 and receives pension benefits or retires with thirty (30) years of service and receives pension benefits provided at least twenty (20) of the thirty years of pension credit is in the North Carolina Annual Conference. The North Carolina pension credit record used to determine insurance funding for retiring Deacons in Full Connection shall consist of eligible North Carolina earned pension credit years in both the lay and clergy pension plans.
3. Effective July 1, 2007, clergy persons who retire at age 59 ½ with 20 or more years may remain on the Conference insurance plan, provided written notification of this intent is provided to the Conference Benefits Manager. The clergy person will be responsible for 100% of the applicable monthly premium until the attainment of age 62 (Report B Section VI B2). At the attainment of age 62, the monthly premium will be adjusted according to the retirement rules in place at the time of retirement. Monthly premiums will then be calculated at the applicable percentages as defined in Report B Section VI D and E.
4. All retired clergy, spouses and surviving dependents must enroll in Medicare part A and part B when first eligible.
5. Effective August 1, 1992, Pastors who discontinued ¶313.1, or Probationary Members, ¶327.6, as well as Conference Members who are retired involuntarily, ¶358.3, who are granted Honorable Location, ¶359; who withdraw to unite with another denomination, ¶360.1; who surrender the ordained ministerial office ¶360.2; who withdraw under complaints or charges, ¶360.3; and Conference Members who are placed on Administrative Location, ¶362 are ineligible to receive retirement health or life insurance benefits when payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits begin. [Paragraphs noted are from The Book of Discipline, 2008]

C. Retirement prior to January 1, 2004

Clergy persons who retire prior to January 1, 2004 from the North Carolina Annual Conference will be subject to the current rate policy as outlined below. Effective January 1, 2004, there will be a minimum monthly contribution of \$10 per participant (for all surviving dependents and retirees with a clergy retirement date prior to January 1, 2004).

Effective January 1, 2012 the minimum monthly contribution as defined above will be increased to \$20 per month.

1. Before the retired clergy person and/or spouse reach the age of Medicare eligibility (currently 65 years of age), the retired clergy person will pay the amount of premium that he/she paid in the year in which he/she retires. The Conference Board of Pensions will pay the difference between the clergy person's payment and the costs of his/her health insurance. The retired clergy person must continue to pay the amount of premium that he/she paid in the year of retirement until both the retired clergy person and his/her spouse reach the age of Medicare eligibility. Billings will be made monthly from the Treasurer's Office.
2. If a clergy person who, prior to retirement, has been covered as a single individual for the purposes of health insurance, wishes at the time of retirement to add family members to his/her health care plan, he/she must pay the premium applicable to that type of coverage for the year in which he/she retired. The retired clergy person must continue to pay that amount of premium until both the retired clergy person and his/her spouse reach the age of Medicare eligibility. A clergy person who retires from the North Carolina Annual Conference with less than twenty (20) full-time years of earned pension credit in the North Carolina Annual Conference may receive life and health insurance benefits when the clergy person attains age 62 and receives pension benefits or retires with thirty-five (35) years of service and receives pension benefits provided at least twenty of the thirty-five years of pension credit is in the North Carolina Annual Conference. Retired clergy persons and/or dependents with less than twenty years of earned pension credit in the North Carolina Annual Conference will be responsible for the monthly insurance premiums as described in #1 above, with the remaining monthly portion shared by the retired clergy person and/or dependents and the Conference Board of Pensions, based on the following formula:

Pensions: Report B - Pension Program & Post Retirement Benefits from page 15

Years of Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
1	95%	5%
2	90%	10%
3	85%	15%
4	80%	20%
5	75%	25%
6	70%	30%
7	65%	35%
8	60%	40%
9	55%	45%
10	50%	50%
11	45%	55%
12	40%	60%
13	35%	65%
14	30%	70%
15	25%	75%
16	20%	80%
17	15%	85%
18	10%	90%
19	5%	95%
20	\$10 Minimum	Remaining Premium

This payment formula remains in effect throughout the participant's lifetime (clergy person or surviving dependent).

D. Retirement after January 1, 2004
(Eligibility policies can be found in Report B, section VI B)
Effective January 1, 2004 the following schedule(s) will apply to all retired clergy and their eligible dependents, whose retirement date is January 1, 2004 or later.

1. Medicare Eligible (retiree and/or dependents)

Years of NC Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension Contribution
0-4	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
5-9	80%	20%
10-14	70%	30%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

Age Less than Medicare Eligible (retiree and/or dependents)**

Years of NC Pension Credit	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension Contribution
0-4	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
5-9	80%	20%
10-14	70%	30%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

2. **The minimum monthly premium billed to the individual will be no less than the active monthly personal portion of the premium for the applicable coverage type.

E. Retirement after January 1, 2007 (revised June 2008)
(Eligibility policies can be found in Report B, Section VI B.)
1. Effective January 1, 2007 the Conference Board of Pensions will fund only the % above as applied to the Medicare Companion plan rate. Retirees and/or dependents not yet Medicare eligible age will be responsible for the difference between the funded amount as calculated based on the above table(s) and the remaining cost of full coverage.
2. The above % of the Medicare Companion plan premium will be applied to the total active family rate until both the retiree and spouse attain the Medicare eligibility age.

3. Participants who retired under provision E1, (2007 rule) will have their rates re-calculated effective July 1, 2008 to comply with the new E2 provision.

F. Retirement after July 1, 2009
(Eligibility policies can be found in Report B, Section VI B.)
Clergy under appointment as of June 30, 2009

1. Post retirement insurance plan eligibility for clergy who are licensed, commissioned, or ordained under NC Episcopal appointment to a NC Conference responsible appointment (i.e., eligible for enrollment in the Conference Insurance Plan) as of June 30, 2009 will be determined using years of NC pension credit/pension eligibility accrued through June 30, 2009. Effective July 1, 2009, accrual of future year's credit toward post retirement benefits will be determined by months of enrollment in the Conference insurance plan with a minimum of 60 months immediately preceding retirement.
2. The retiree must participate in the NC Insurance Plan for 60 consecutive months immediately prior to the date of retirement.
3. In order to maintain insurance benefits after retirement, the retiree must be enrolled in the applicable coverage immediately preceding the date of retirement.
4. Clergy with 60 months of participation in the NC Insurance Plan immediately prior to retirement, but less than 180 months in the plan (over the course of career) will have access to the NC Conference Insurance Plan and contribute the full cost of the applicable coverage of the plan.
5. The retiree may only cover dependents that are covered at the time of retirement.
6. Funding will be based on the chart printed below:

Years of NC Pension Credit/Years in NC Insurance Plan	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
0-4	Not eligible	Not eligible
5- 14	100%	0%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

G. Newly appointed Clergy (licensed, commissioned or ordained receiving first time appointment) effective July 1, 2009

1. Post retirement insurance plan eligibility for clergy newly licensed, commissioned or ordained effective July 1, 2009, under Episcopal appointment to a NC Conference responsible appointment (i.e. eligible for enrollment in the Conference Insurance plan) will be based on total months enrolled in the Conference Insurance Plan with a minimum of 180 months total enrollment with 60 consecutive months enrollment immediately preceding the date of retirement for funding eligibility.
2. Participants who meet the 60 consecutive months enrollment but do not meet the 180 months minimum will have access to the plan with no funding from the Conference Board of Pensions. The participant will be responsible for 100% of the applicable premiums.
3. Credited enrollment in the insurance plan, once earned, will not be reduced or terminated due to breaks in enrollment.
4. Funding will be based on the following:

Years in NC Insurance Plan	Individual Contribution	Board of Pension's Contribution
0-4	Not eligible	Not eligible
5-14	100%	0%
15-19	60%	40%
20-24	50%	50%
25-29	40%	60%
30-34	30%	70%
35-39	20%	80%
40 or more	10%	90%

H. Effective January 1, 2012 the North Carolina Conference recommends a PPO Base Plan for health insurance benefits with the option of a PPO Buy-Up plan for increased health insurance benefits
I. Life Insurance - A clergy person must have been covered under the conference active life insurance plan in order to retain life insurance benefits after retirement. The Board of Pensions does not provide life insurance for dependents of retired clergy.
J. Clergy Couples Insurance
1. When one member of a clergy couple retires, medical and life insurance

Commission on Equitable Compensation

The *Book of Discipline* mandates that "there shall be in each annual conference a commission on equitable compensation" (§ 625), whose purpose is "to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference" (§625.2). Three broad areas of responsibility are outlined in §625.2, which are: "(a) recommending conference standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; and (c) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations."

God calls persons to ministry to go into all the world, preaching, teaching and baptizing (Matthew 28:19), for without them the world would not have heard Christ preached (Romans 10:14). These are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1). The Church lifts up some persons for the role of clergy and ordains these persons to the work of pastoral ministry to be servants of the servants of God.

Those who are ordained to pastoral ministry answer affirmatively the historic

question of John Wesley, (§330.17) "Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?" For such a called, set apart and committed clergy, the Church assumes an obligation to plan adequate support. The *Book of Discipline* is clear that "the primary responsibility for payment of pastoral salaries remains with individual pastoral charges (§625.5; see also §247.13). Pastoral charges carry a responsibility for clergy salaries as one expression of their missional and ministry presences in the community. We recognize that such a missional presence also includes faithful payment of apportionments in full as ministry beyond the local church.

The Commission seeks equity and fairness for both pastors and local churches. Why should this commission be so concerned about equity and fairness? Our prayerful consideration of scriptural and historical foundations are found in the following:

- Jesus says, "the laborer deserves to be paid," (Luke 10:7) and Paul reminds us "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of compensation, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,'" (1 Timothy 5:17,18).
- Wesley was concerned that clergy have responsibility not to be "in debt so as to embarrass you in your work" (§330.18), which implies that the Church has a responsibility that it neither lead its clergy into positions of embarrassing indebtedness, nor leave them there.
- The Great Commission to "go into all the world preaching, teaching and baptizing" brings with it a cost. Systems of clergy support which foster the use of the right pastor in the right place, hold up the hope of seeing the Great Commission bear its promised fruit.
- The Commission on Equitable Compensation embraces the Great Commandment to "love our neighbors as we love ourselves" by desiring for each pastor what our members' desire for themselves – compensation adequate to free persons for the work of pastoral ministry.

Through our prayers, working and considering together as both laity and clergy from across The N.C. Annual Conference, we make the following recommendations. We believe these recommendations will help us move toward fairness for both local churches and pastors as together we support ordained ministry in The N.C. Annual Conference.

The Commission on Equitable Compensation's mandate and mission is to ensure justice and fairness in salaries of active full-time pastors of our local congregations. While, for many years, we have been recommending a single minimum salary for all full-time pastors serving, we have found that many congregations look at the "minimum salary recommendation" as "the amount we have to pay the pastor." Clarification of "minimum compensation" may benefit the mission and ministry of the local congregations.

The definition of "minimum" is not the ceiling, or maximum, amount of "the pastor's salary;" rather, it is the floor, or minimum, of what a full-time pastor is to be paid. No full-time pastor may be paid less than the minimum compensation. We recommend that each congregation review its ability to sustain its pastor independently and only use the minimum salary as just that, a minimum, and prayerfully discern the appropriate level of compensation for its called leader. As Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there is your heart." When the congregation's treasure and heart are in the health and effectiveness of both local congregation and pastor, God is glorified!

For the year **2011**, the average full-time salary increase was approximately **2.33%**. The CPI (Urban South) for the last twelve months ending December **2010** showed an increase of **1.7%**. The Commission currently recommends a **0% (\$0)** increase in Salary, a **0% (\$0)** increase in Utilities, and a **0% (\$0)** increase in Travel. Including the recommended travel amount this represents a total increase of **0%** for the year **2012**. Our recommendation is based on several factors: (1) the average compensation from other conferences; (2) it more closely reflects the majority of salary increases for this conference; (3) shows concern for general economic trends.

I. Recommended Schedule of Minimum Compensation for 2012:

A. Salary Schedule

We recommend that the *student minimum salary* be based on 65% of the minimum salary of full-time pastors.

PASTORS UNDER FULL-TIME APPOINTMENT (Full Connection, Associate, Probationary, Local Pastor)	2011	2012
Salary	\$40,319	\$40,319
STUDENT PASTORS (Local Pastors or Conference Members)		
Salary	\$26,207	\$26,207

B. Utilities Expense

It is recommended that *each local charge would provide at least \$2,400 for utilities expense*. Utilities have been defined in guidance from the Internal Revenue Service to be electricity, heat, water/sewer, trash pick-up, and local telephone expenses. In order to increase accountability surrounding utility payments and to help ease transitions during appointment changes, the Commission recommends that the local church pay utilities directly to the utilities companies instead of through unvouchered allowances to the pastors.

C. Travel Expense

Although travel is reimbursed by the local charge as an item of pastoral

Pensions: Report B - from page 16

will be paid for the retiree according to the schedules and rules previously listed.

- Health insurance will be provided for the spouse and eligible dependents of the retired clergy partner according to the rules and schedules previously listed.
- Each member of a clergy couple would receive credit for the years they were covered under the plan.*

K. Surviving Spouses

Surviving spouses of active participants:

- Must be enrolled in the health insurance plan at the time of the participant's death in order to receive health insurance benefits under the current health insurance plan.
- The Conference Board of Pensions will pay the health insurance premiums for surviving spouses and eligible dependents for up to six months following the death of the active clergy person.
- Premiums thereafter will be determined by the retirement rules in place on the date of death.
- When surviving spouses are employed and provided health insurance by their employer, the plan of the Board of Pensions will be the secondary carrier.
- If the surviving spouse remarries, the conference health insurance will terminate. Future benefits under the conference health insurance plan are waived.

Surviving spouses of retired participants:

- Surviving spouses of retired clergy must be enrolled in the health insurance plan at the time of the retired clergy's death in order to receive health insurance benefits under the current health insurance plan.
- Surviving spouses currently enrolled who married the clergy person after the clergy person's retirement, can remain covered by the health insurance plan. The Board of Pensions grants a flat rate of \$150.00 monthly towards the cost of the surviving spouse's coverage. The remaining premium will be the responsibility of the surviving spouse.
- Surviving spouses of retired clergy who married the clergy person prior to the clergy person's retirement are subject to the payment schedule applicable prior to the death of the clergy person.
- Effective January 1, 2001 retired clergy persons may not add new dependents to the health insurance plan.

VII. Intent

The North Carolina Annual Conference established health, dental, and life insurance plans with the intent of providing coverage for the active and retired pastors. However, the Annual Conference reserves the right to terminate the health, dental, and life contracts, in whole or in part, at any time. The Annual Conference, at any time or from time to time, may amend any or all of the provisions of the health or life plans without the consent of the individual participants.

VIII. Dental Insurance

The Board of Pensions recommends that retired ministers covered under the health insurance plan have dental insurance. Dental benefits became available on July 1, 1987.

IX. Special Provisions

The North Carolina Annual Conference Board of Pensions is hereby authorized, at its discretion, to arrange with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for active participation in the CRSP and/or CPP by persons who are eligible under special rules but not automatically included as active participants. (CRSP Plan Document Section 3.3 and CPP Plan Document Section 3.2.)

X. Conclusion

Our constant aim is to provide our retired families with their needs for an adequate income to purchase essentials for living as well as to insure adequate care in case of illness. To these ends our recommendations are directed, and their satisfaction is found in the acceptance of the North Carolina Conference and its membership.

Committee on Insurance

I. The Insurance Committee is to be made up of representatives from the following boards and agencies: 2-Board of Pensions; 1-Board of Pensions Chair; 2-Board of Ordained Ministry; 2-Joint Committee on Incapacity; 3-Lay Members appointed by the Commission on Laity; 5-At Large Members. The following members are without vote: 1-Conference Treasurer; 1-Controller; 1-Benefits Manager; 1-Director of Ministerial Relations. The representative should be elected at the organizational meeting of these boards and agencies. Once elected from its constituent groups at the beginning of each quadrennium, the Insurance Committee's membership will remain established for the remainder of that quadrennium.

II. Group Term Life Insurance

- A. The current life insurance program is provided by *MetLife*.
- B. Our coverage is \$25,000 for active participants, \$12,500 for retired clergy up to age 72. Effective July 1, 2005 the coverage for retirees age 72 and over is \$5,000. Current spouse and child coverage is \$10,000 per person. The spouse's insurance terminates upon retirement of the subscriber.
- C. The life insurance plan is non-contributory. Life insurance premiums are to be paid by the salary-paying unit.
- D. Supplemental Life insurance guidelines (voluntary individual enrollment):
 1. Participant must be enrolled in active Conference life insurance plan.
 2. Initial voluntary enrollment November 1 – 30, 2007 for an effective date of January 1, 2008.

3. Premiums should be withheld by the salary-paying unit on an after tax basis. Premiums will be included on the monthly invoices issued by the Treasurer's Office.
4. Late applicants are subject to health questions and must be approved by *MetLife*.

E. LIFE INSURANCE CLAIMS PAID IN 2010:

Total Claims Paid: 16
Total Benefit Paid: \$177,500

III. Health Insurance Benefits

A. Group Health

1. The Insurance Committee will provide the proposed benefits to the members immediately before each Annual Conference session. The committee considers the most current financial information that is available before adopting its recommendations.
2. Insurance companies who make inquiries, for the purpose of submitting proposals, will be notified of a \$200 processing fee. This fee will help cover the costs of preparation and processing of the information necessary for proposals.
3. **The Insurance Committee will donate \$1,000 for handicap-**

See "Insurance," page 19

Commission on Equitable Compensation *continued from page 17*

expense, it is expected that *each local charge would provide at least \$4,000 for travel expense*. The Commission encourages each charge to establish a plan to reimburse the pastor for all legitimate business mileage at the current rate established by the IRS. Where such a plan is established for reimbursement of business mileage, equitable compensation support shall not be affected by payment of travel expenses. However, where a reimbursement plan is not implemented and a travel allowance is given, *any travel allowance in excess of \$4,000 will result in a reduction of equitable compensation support*.

D. Pension Program

Charges receiving Equitable Compensation Funds support are responsible for paying the total amount required for the Clergy Pension Plan and the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) based on the pastor's cash base compensation (including funds from the Equitable Compensation Fund, Duke Endowment, and any other sources), and housing (percentage of cash base compensation designated by the General Board of Pension/Health Benefits or housing allowance, if provided in lieu of a parsonage).

II. Principles Governing Eligibility for Equitable Compensation Funds:

The clergy's base compensation is the responsibility of the charge; therefore, each charge of The North Carolina Annual Conference should be so arranged as to be able to assume full salary support. The Commission urges each charge receiving Equitable Compensation Funds, its pastor, and the district superintendent responsible for that charge, to administer the affairs of that charge to the end that it may move as rapidly as possible toward total self-support. To enable the Annual Conference, the Commission and the district superintendents to carry on their cooperative efforts in understanding, in harmony, and for the greatest good for all concerned, the following principles and procedures are set forth:

- A. **Base Compensation:** In considering the base compensation for the charge, all income, including base compensation, bonuses, and other benefits not specifically excluded, are included as base compensation in determining appropriations from the Equitable Compensation Fund.
- B. **Any Equitable Compensation Fund supplement will be terminated immediately** upon information that the pastor has taken full-time, secular employment. The supplement may be reinstated at the time the charge's appointed pastor returns to full-time or student status. Exceptions to this provision will be permitted only by the approval of the executive committee of the Commission on Equitable Compensation upon the recommendation of the district superintendent of the pastor seeking to be employed outside their ministerial responsibilities for emergency reasons.
- C. **Disbursement of funds from Conference Treasurer's Office:** Equitable Compensation Funds are to be sent to charges that have applied for their use to provide their pastor with the minimum base compensation established by the Annual Conference. The monthly base compensation supplement checks sent by the Conference Treasurer's office are to be deposited by the charge treasurer into the charge/church bank account. *Checks shall not be endorsed nor cashed by the pastor.*
- D. **Application for funds:** Churches or charges applying for Equitable Compensation Funds shall submit a request on the appropriate form. The pastor, Administrative Council, and the district superintendent, shall carefully review the request. The application form must have the signatures of the pastor, recording secretary of the charge conference, and the district superintendent affixed to it, and receive the approval of the charge conference. **Applications received that are not completed in full are not eligible for consideration by the Commission until such time that they have been completed and resubmitted.**
- E. The Commission on Equitable Compensation will not fund any charge that is also receiving funds from The Emerging Church Salary Fund. The Commission

on Equitable Compensation plans further consultation and study with other Conference boards and agencies to seek ways to more adequately provide for the temporal needs of our pastors and churches.

- F. Consideration may be given to make funds available for the deacon when the primary appointment is to a local church. (*Discipline 2008*, ¶ 625.4)

III. Policies Governing Use of Equitable Compensation Funds

- A. Charges must be so arranged that no more than one third (1/3) of the total base compensation will come from the Equitable Compensation Fund on the first application of the charge.

1. **Charges seeking more than one third (1/3) supplement** shall provide specific information with their application, indicating the reasons for their inability to meet these guidelines. Information shall be made available to the Commission on Equitable Compensation and the district superintendent regarding the terms of Equitable Compensation support, giving the date of its inception and the present amount of support being received by the respective charges.

2. **When the division of a charge is desired**, Equitable Compensation funds will be used only upon the recommendation of the Bishop and the approval of the cabinet. In the division of a charge in which one church seeks to become a station, it is recommended that such a church shall assume total responsibility for base compensation and its proportionate share of all apportionments.

- a. The remainder of the charge in such a division assumes full pastoral support and proportionate share of all apportionments. In no case will the Commission on Equitable Compensation provide more than one third (1/3) of the base compensation required for such a division.
- b. When there is a division of a charge forming one or more student appointments, each newly created charge shall pay initially two thirds (2/3) of the pastoral support established by the division.

B. Annual Reduction and Length of Time for Support:

1. Each charge which is receiving, or shall hereafter receive, Equitable Compensation Fund assistance, is expected to reduce this aid by at least twenty-five percent (25%) each year, until the charge has achieved full self-support in five (5) years.

- C. **Merit Grant Supplemental to Base Compensation:** Each full-time minister, associate member, or member in full connection of The N.C. Annual Conference, serving full-time, and who, in the opinion of the cabinet is rendering unusually effective service, may apply for a grant in the amount of \$400, when such clergy person's salary and utilities are equal to the Conference minimum base compensation.

1. This grant must be applied for on an annual basis, with an annual incremental increase of \$400 per year, not to exceed \$2,000 per year, for five years of full-time service. This grant may not exceed a lifetime maximum of \$6,000. Special attention shall be given to ethnic pastors serving ethnic ministries (*Book of Discipline 2008*, ¶ 625.6). Said incremental increase is to be administered by the Commission on Equitable Compensation upon the recommendation of the cabinet, approval by the charge conference, and the district superintendent.
2. Further, the local church shall be responsible for all Clergy Pension Plan and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) payments on incremental increase.
3. This policy does not restrict the Commission on Compensation, upon the recommendation of the cabinet, from making additional grants in extraordinary circumstances.

- IV. The Commission reports that **10** charges received a total of **\$85,061.04** in compensation assistance in the year **2010**.

Para Rodenhizer Drake, Chairperson

Committee on Insurance *continued from page 18*

camperships on an annual basis. The NC Conference health care plan has been amended as necessary to comply with federal Health Care Reform.

B. Policy and Rules

1. Effective January 1, 2004, the North Carolina Conference offered a Preferred Provider (PPO) health insurance plan administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina. Benefits will include health, dental, pharmacy, mental health, Medical Reimbursement Accounts, Dependent Day Care Accounts, and life insurance. Details may be obtained by contacting the Benefits Manager in the Treasurer's Office, 800-849-4433.
2. **Effective January 1, 2012 the North Carolina Conference recommends a PPO Base Plan for health insurance benefits with the option of a PPO Buy-Up plan for increased health insurance benefits.**
3. Medical Reimbursement and Dependent Care Accounts must be established during Open Enrollment (November 1 – 30), for an effective date of the following January 1. If you do not claim these funds prior to March 31 for the preceding plan year (plan year being the previous calendar year plus a 75 day grace period of the current year), these funds are forfeited. Participation in the Medical Reimbursement and Dependent Care accounts is contingent upon participation in the health insurance plan.
4. A change of life circumstances (divorce, death, loss of spousal coverage) will allow a mid-year change. When there is a change in family status, or a change of address, it is the insured's responsibility to notify the Treasurer's Office within 30 days. The toll free number to the Methodist Building in Raleigh is 1-800-849-4433 where staff persons continue to provide personal attention to insurance matters.
5. Effective January 1, 2004, health insurance for the subscriber may continue for 18 months after employment is terminated provided that full payment of the monthly premiums is made in advance. The continuation of life insurance beyond the termination of employment is not permitted by the life insurance carrier. **Conversion of the life insurance may be possible by contacting MetLife at 1.877.275.6387 or solutions@metlife.com.**
6. Adding new family members must be completed within 30 days of the qualifying event **or 60 days if the eligible change is related to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).**
7. Participants applying at any time other than the initial enrollment period (30 days from the date first eligible) would may be subject to the one year pre-existing conditions clause. Submission of a valid Certificate of Insurance may eliminate or decrease this 12 month clause. The exception to this rule would be possible by a change in life status causing loss of coverage: divorce, death of spouse, loss of spouse's employment, reduction of hours regarding spouse's coverage. **Children under the age of 19 are not subject to preexisting conditions.**
8. Effective January 1, 2004, the Conference health insurance plan will be the primary carrier for active participants who continue to work past the Medicare eligibility age, and are enrolled in the Conference health plan.
9. Retired participants should sign up for Medicare parts A and B upon reaching the Medicare eligibility age. The Medicare Companion Plan is the only plan offered to retirees past this age. Medicare becomes the primary payer, with the Conference plan as secondary.
10. A participant must be covered in the Conference insurance for five consecutive and uninterrupted years immediately prior to retirement to retain insurance benefits after retirement. All participants enrolled on January 1, 2001 will be prorated under this rule.
11. Pre-Certification of all in-patient admissions is required. Effective January 1, 2004, call Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC at 800-214-4844. Mental Health benefits should be pre-certified through Magellan Behavioral Health at 800-359-2422
12. Denial of claims or incorrect processing of claims should be appealed through Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC. There are two levels of appeal.
13. Payment for the church's portion of the insurance programs must be made by the church/charge treasurer. Personal checks cannot be accepted due to IRS regulations governing Section 125 cafeteria plans. The personal portion of insurance premiums should be withheld from the participant's salary by the salary-paying unit on a pre-tax basis.
14. Premiums for health and life insurance may be paid in ADVANCE on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis.
15. Lay persons or clergy on maternity/family medical leave may continue their insurance coverage, as long as the premiums are paid.
16. The Insurance Committee may terminate the coverage for non-payment of premiums. Insurance payments which are 60 days late (from the date of the bill) will result in termination of benefits. Termination will take place on the last day of the month in which the 60th day has occurred. Benefits may be reinstated without lapse in coverage if full payment is made within 30 days of the termination date. Thereafter, insurance coverage may be reinstated upon full payment and coverage will be effective the first day of the following month. The one-year waiting period for pre-existing conditions will apply to all

reinstatements where a lapse in coverage occurs. **Children under the age of 19 are not subject to preexisting conditions.**

17. In case of termination of coverage, the church is responsible for the premium until the Treasurer's Office is notified in writing of such termination.

IV. Statement of Intent

The NC Annual Conference established a Group Health and Life Insurance Plan with the intent of providing coverage for the active and retired clergy. However, the Annual Conference reserves the right to terminate the health and life contracts, in whole or in part, at any time. The Annual Conference, at any time or from time to time, may amend any or all of the provisions of the health or life plan without the consent of individual participants.

V. Eligibility Policies of Non-Retired Participants

- A. If you enroll in the Conference insurance plan, you are eligible for your coverage to begin on the first day of the month following the date of hire, or appointment. Coverage is not automatic. Completion of an enrollment form on a timely basis is required (within 30 days of original eligibility).
- B. You must work a minimum of 30 hours per week to be eligible for the Conference insurance plans.
- C. Health insurance and life insurance through the Conference groups will be available to the following:
 1. Clergy who are members in full connection of the Conference, probationary and commissioned probationary members, associate members, student local clergy, part-time local clergy, interim supplies (covered as lay employees) serving full-time or part-time (half-time or greater making one-half of minimum salary as determined by the Pension Worksheet line 7 and working at least 30 hours per week) under appointment in:
 - a. One of the churches or charges of the NC Conference.
 - b. One of the institutions or agencies of this Conference receiving financial support from the Conference.
 - c. An institution or agency established to provide a ministry or service provided that:
 - i. Clergy shall elect in writing within 30 days after the appointment to continue the coverage. If the coverage is discontinued, a one year waiting period for pre-existing conditions may apply.
 - ii. The institution shall be responsible for payment of all insurance premiums by the due date.
 2. Clergy on Leave of Absence, provided a written request to retain benefits is submitted to the Benefits Manager within 30 days of the appointment of Leave of Absence. The participant is responsible for the entire monthly rate (church portion and personal portion) by the due date.
- D. Post Retirement Benefits
 1. Eligibility for post retirement benefits may be viewed in detail in the Board of Pensions Report Section B.
 2. Post retirement health plan eligibility for clergy newly licensed, commissioned or ordained effective July 1, 2009, under Episcopal appointment to a NC Conference responsible appointment (i.e. eligible for enrollment in the Conference Insurance plan) will be based on total months enrolled in the Conference Insurance Plan with a minimum of 180 months total enrollment with 60 consecutive months enrollment immediately preceding the date of retirement for funding eligibility.
- E. Clergy Couple Appointments
 1. Clergy couples will be enrolled in the life insurance program separately. This affords the clergy couple with the maximum life insurance benefits available. Clergy couples are not permitted to cover each other under the provisions of the life insurance. Eligible dependents may only be covered by one member of the clergy couple.
- F. Incapacity Leave Appointments
 1. Clergy placed on Incapacity Leave can remain covered under the Conference insurance plans, provided they were enrolled and covered in the Conference plan immediately preceding the approval date of Incapacity Leave.
- G. Clergy eligible for life and health insurance through the North Carolina Conference benefits under option V. A - C (above) are entitled to these benefits.
- H. Lay Employees:
 1. An insurance administrator must be appointed at each church/charge to manage insurance policies dealing with lay staff. It is the responsibility of each local church/charge and its officers to be apprised of the parameters of the Conference insurance plan.
 2. Each local church must have at least 75% participation of the eligible lay employees to participate in the Conference plan.
 - a. As of January 1, 2007, churches who currently have less than 75% participation will be allowed to continue the current participation of their lay employees under the Conference plan.
 3. The employee must work a minimum of 30 hours weekly and must be enrolled in the period specified for initial enrollment.
 - a. This period being within 30 days of date first eligible, or be added as a late applicant during Open Enrollment.
 4. Persons appointed as Interim Supply are enrolled as lay employees.
 5. The Committee recommends that the church provide this benefit to lay

Joint Committee on Incapacity

The Joint Committee on Incapacity acts as the advocate for those pastors in the North Carolina Conference who are forced by physical or emotional incapacity to seek temporary or permanent relief from their appointment. The committee is given the responsibility to study the problems of incapacity within the Conference, to provide a continuing personal ministry to those who are incapacitated, and to make recommendations to the appropriate agencies of the Conference for each pastor or deacon seeking Incapacity Leave, including the source of their disability income. The Joint Committee on Incapacity has begun a study of the utilization of incapacity benefits in our annual conference and how our utilization compares to denominational and jurisdictional averages. The committee will continue to monitor resource levels needed to fund incapacity benefits as one part of efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability of our support for clergy on incapacity leave.

Persons interested in discovering more about the process of being granted Incapacity Leave can contact a district superintendent or the chair of the Joint Committee on Incapacity.

The following recommendations are presented to the **2011** session of the North Carolina Annual Conference:

I. General Policies

- A. The Joint Committee on Incapacity, through the Conference Treasurer's Office, will make available upon request the necessary forms for any full time pastor or deacon to make application for Incapacity Leave. In all cases the applications must be completed by the pastor or deacon, the physician, chair

Committee on Insurance

continued from page 19

employees with the same premium payment policy as recommended for clergy.

6. All churches providing post-retirement benefits to lay employees will be billed in full for all premiums associated with retirement insurance benefits. The Annual Conference is not responsible for the premiums of local church retired lay staff.

I. Continuation of Benefits

1. The participant may be eligible to continue health insurance for up to 18 months following the loss of employment or appointment.
2. Written requests for continuation should be submitted to the Conference Benefits Manager within 30 days of the termination of employment or loss of appointment.
3. The life insurance cannot be continued. **Conversion of the life insurance may be possible by contacting MetLife at 1.877.275.6387 or solutions@metlife.com.**
4. Flexible Spending Accounts are not available to terminated participants, as they are no longer receiving salary from which to withhold these funds. Funds already contributed must be claimed within 90 days of the termination date.

J. Open Enrollment

1. Open Enrollment is held each year from November 1 through November 30.
2. During Open Enrollment, an active employee or appointee may enroll in the Conference insurance plan.
3. Flexible Spending Accounts must be established for the upcoming year during Open Enrollment. If the participant does not establish a new account during each Open Enrollment, they cannot participate in the Flexible Spending Accounts for the upcoming year.

- K. The Insurance Committee continues to explore eligibility options for future benefit plans and questions of church participation.

- L. Participants enrolled in the Conference health and life insurance plans may continue to be enrolled in the Conference benefits as long as they are Episcopally appointed, employed as lay staff, meet the qualifications of Continuation as defined in Section G above, and meet the required eligibility rules and regulations.

- VI. Historically, the Insurance Committee has developed rates based on maximum actuarially projected claims. The Insurance Committee may use funds in excess of the plan's operational needs to fund post retirement benefits.

- VII. The Insurance Committee strives diligently to present the best possible health and life insurance coverage available to the North Carolina Annual Conference. Careful consideration is given to benefits and rates that are proposed each year.

VIII. Proposed 2012 Health and Life Insurance Monthly Rates

	BASE Plan	BUY-UP Plan
Health Church Portion	\$918.02	\$918.02
Health Personal Portion		
Single	\$149.46	\$173.49
Parent/Child	\$276.65	\$321.11
Family	\$380.78	\$441.97
Medicare Companion Plan (total)	\$406.13	\$442.40
Life Insurance (paid by the salary-paying unit)		
Single	\$14.50	
Family	\$18.75	

The Committee wishes to thank the members of the Annual Conference for their support.

James Mentzer, Chairperson

of the Joint Committee on Incapacity, Conference benefits officer, and the district superintendent before the request for Incapacity Leave can be acted upon. Whenever possible incapacity requests are to be submitted ninety (90) days prior to Annual Conference except in life-threatening situations after that date, or when the disabling condition occurs after that date. Requests presented before May 15 will be included in the Committee's report to the Annual Conference.

- B. Definition of Incapacity: For the first 24 months, an active participant will be considered incapacitated for the purposes of the Comprehensive Protection Plan or the Basic Protection Plan as of the date the Administrator determines, on the basis of medical evidence, that such active participant was unable to perform the usual and customary duties of his/her employment by reason of bodily injury, disease, or mental or emotional disease or disorder that will presumably last for at least six continuous months, exclusive of any incapacity resulting from service in the armed forces of any country, warfare, intentionally self-inflicted injury, or participation in any criminal or unlawful act.
- C. Definition of Clergy: Clergy in The United Methodist Church are individuals who serve as commissioned ministers, deacons, elders, and local pastors under appointment of a bishop (full- and part-time), who hold membership in an annual conference, and who are commissioned, ordained, or licensed.
- D. A pastor or deacon seeking to be on Incapacity Leave secures a disability claim kit from the Conference Treasurer's Office. The applicant completes Form A, has his or her physician complete Form B, completes the applicant's portion of Form C, and submits all these forms to the Conference Treasurer's Office for completion. Unum reviews the claim and recommends a determination to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits who retains the authority to approve or deny a claim.
- E. We recommend that pastors applying for Incapacity Leave be approved only when the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits grants their request for incapacity benefits through the Comprehensive Protection Plan.
- F. The Annual Conference and Conference Board of Pensions (effective January 1, 2007), will fund pension contributions for the Clergy Retirement Security Program-Defined Benefit Plan in the required annual payment for normal cost as defined by the plan document and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for all pastors receiving incapacity benefits from the Comprehensive Protection Plan.
- G. The Comprehensive Protection Plan (effective January 1, 2007), will fund contributions for the Comprehensive Protection Plan and the Clergy Retirement Security Program-Defined Contribution Plan which is 3% of plan compensation as defined by the plan document and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for all pastors receiving incapacity benefits from the Comprehensive Protection Plan.
- H. Hospital Health Insurance and Life Insurance **benefits are subject to the policies outlined in** shall be paid by the Joint Committee on Incapacity both for those approved by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and those approved by the Joint Committee on Incapacity who are pastors receiving incapacity benefits from the Comprehensive Protection Plan according to Section III, below.
- I. Pastors on Incapacity Leave are **required to file for Social Security benefits within 60 days of the effective date of approved Incapacity Leave. Failure to do so will result in decreased benefits.** reminded to investigate the penalties by the Social Security Administration if they do not elect to come under Medicare at age 65: Participation in Medicare Part A and B is required at the earliest possible date in order to receive **the best full** health insurance benefits. **Participants who choose not to participate in Medicare Part B at that date will receive the same contribution towards the health insurance premium as if they were retired. Refer to Section III regarding benefits.**
- J. Effective July 1, 2008, we recommend that a lump sum grant of \$4,300 be made at the beginning of Incapacity Leave. This grant will be available only one time in a pastor's years of service.
- K. The Joint Committee on Incapacity will review the progress of each pastor or deacon on Incapacity Leave at least annually. This review will include both recommendations from the pastor's physician and district superintendent as well as opportunities for continuing fellowship with the pastor to develop further possibilities of assistance in his/her disabled circumstances.
- L. We recommend the following pastors to be continued on Incapacity Leave:
 1. Vernon Brown, 107 Town Point Rd, Jacksonville, NC 28540 919/223-4536
 2. John M. Crowe, 212 Mimosa Park Drive, Goldsboro, NC 27534 919/759-2146
 3. Ronnie Richard Dawson, PO Box 2335, Surf City, NC 28445 919/618-0272
 4. Tommy Lewis Evans, 110 N First Ave New Bern, NC 28560 252/633-1163
 5. Robert Flynn, 188 Bayberry Lane, Smithfield, NC 27577 919/631-2519
 6. Victor L. Galipi, 11101 Candlewick Road, Bailey, NC 27807 252/234-4251
 7. David William Girod, 515 Crissman Ave., Elon, NC 27244 336/266-9362
 8. Dennis Joseph Glennon, 254 Scotland County Line Rd., Hamlet, NC 28345 910/582-7386
 9. Sherwood Auburn Godwin, 4909 Pinevilla Street, Grifton, NC 28530 252/524-0874
 10. Larry Stephen Grady, 78 Gilbert Street, Marion, NC 28752 828/659-1502
 11. Robert Michael Hammond, 5106 Sandlewood Drive, Raleigh, NC 27601 919/787-8777

See "Incapacity," page 21

Joint Committee on Incapacity *continued from page 20*

12. Susan Harsh-Cafferty, 82 Willowbridge Drive, Durham, NC 27707 919/401-9492
 13. Lawrence Clayton Higgins, 136 Derby Park Ave., New Bern, NC 28562 252/633-0046
 14. Bobby Lee Jordan, 2085 Osborne Road, Hamlet, NC 28345 910/205-0473
 15. Teresa Lawrence, 140 Old Gate Rd, Fayetteville, NC 28314 910/867-8746
 16. Michael W. Leburg, 14024 Leo Rd (SR 1), Leo, IN 46765 765/432-7215
 17. Ronda Lee-Torres, 507 Stornoway Dr., Southern Pines, NC 28387 910/944-2292
 18. Carolyn Wilkins Lucas, 1100 Clarendon St. Apt 602, Fayetteville, NC 28305 919/977-0923
 19. David Ophanalia Malloy, 11841 Barnes Bridge Road, Laurinburg, NC 28352 910/277-0505
 20. **James Edward Malloy, PO Box 961, Fairmont, NC 28340 910/534-0003**
 21. **Gregory L McGarvey, 3005 Thornhill Rd, Fayetteville, NC 28306 610/562-6788**
 22. Hector Manuel Millan, 2721 Lead Crystal Ct, Raleigh, NC 27610 919/720-4330
 23. Lon William Miller, 156 Pond Rd., Rocky Point, NC 28457 910/251-9266
 24. William Rickman Pinner, 1521 Harvey Johnson Rd, Raleigh, NC 27603 919/773-0116
 25. Clinton William Spence, 1308 Shady Ln, Durham, NC 27712 919/477-7323
 26. John Albert Trotter, 427 Glenwood Ave, Burlington, NC 27215 336/229-1855
 27. Debra Starling Watson, 622 Highland Park Dr., Eden, NC 27288 336/623-5912
 28. LaVerne Blue Womack, Jr., 10760 Taylor Rd, Laurinburg, NC 28352 910/610-1248
- M. We recommend the following pastors to be placed on Incapacity Leave for the first time:
- James Edward Malloy, Effective July 1, 2010**
Gregory L McGarvey, Effective November 1, 2010
Stephen Compton, Effective July 1, 2011
- N. Who have been placed on Incapacity Leave since the last Annual Conference?
James Edward Malloy, Effective July 1, 2010
Gregory L McGarvey, Effective November 1, 2010
- O. Who have had their Incapacity Leave terminated since the last conference session?
Camille O. Yorkey Compton, Effective June 13, 2010
John Clifton Lupton, Jr., Effective September 10, 2010
- P. Who are to be removed from Incapacity Leave at this Annual Conference?
Wilson Edward Barber
Doris T. Fox
Clarence Arthur Wall
- Q. We recommend that pastors and congregations in the communities in which our disabled pastors reside seek to establish a supportive relationship with those on Incapacity Leave to maintain good fellowship and provide for pastoral opportunities.

II. Incapacity Leave Benefits

GBOPHB:

- A. **70% of plan compensation not to exceed 200% of the DAC (2011 DAC=\$61,716) as income from CPP. The current range of payments to NC participants is \$22,500 to \$66,000 annually (with a 3% annual increase). Payments are coordinated with Social Security Disability benefits when applicable.**
 - B. **Benefits afforded active clergy such as pension accrual and the death benefit under CPP.**
 - C. **A one-time lump distribution of up to 35% of MPP funds.**
- NC Conference:**
- D. **Grant of \$4300 to help with the transition from active ministry to Incapacity.**
 - E. **Insurance benefits through the NC Conference insurance plans (provided the participant was enrolled in the applicable insurance plan prior to the granting of Incapacity Leave). Life insurance is paid in full by the Joint Committee on Incapacity. Effective January 1, 2011 all participants**

enrolled in the Conference health insurance plan, pay \$10 per month for coverage with the remaining balance of premiums paid by the Joint Committee on Incapacity. Please refer to Section III Policies Related to Life and Health Insurance for proposed changes.

F. **Moving expenses paid as outlined in the Itinerant Clergy Moving Expense Report (page 180 of the 2010 Journal).**

The Duke Endowment:

G. **Duke Endowment annual grant (subject to the guidelines and availability as defined by The Duke Endowment)**

III. Incapacity Policies Related to Life and Health Insurance-Benefits

- A. Incapacity Leave participants will have 60 days from the approved date of Incapacity Leave in which to file for Social Security benefits. Proof of filing must be submitted to the Conference Benefits Manager. Incapacity Leave participants approved on or before July 1, 2011 will have 60 days from July 1, 2011 to provide proof of their Social Security application. Participants who fail to provide proof of filing within 60 days will be charged 100% of the applicable monthly insurance rate until notification is received by the Benefits Manager.
- B. Insurance Coverage -- Participants approved for Incapacity Leave must be covered under the Conference life and/or health insurance plan immediately preceding the approval date of Incapacity Leave in order to have life and/or health insurance coverage after the appointment of Incapacity Leave.
- C. Five Year Rule -- Participants must be covered for five consecutive uninterrupted years immediately prior to the date of retirement in order to retain insurance benefits after retirement.
- D. Life Insurance --
 - i. The life insurance premiums are paid by the Joint Committee on Incapacity.
 - ii. Current participants on Incapacity Leave who are enrolled in the life insurance are covered as follows: \$25,000 life coverage, \$10,000 on eligible dependents.
 - iii. **Supplemental life insurance premiums are the responsibility of the individual.**
- E. Health Insurance --
 1. Effective January 1, 2011, all participants on Incapacity Leave with Conference health insurance will contribute the retiree minimum amount towards the monthly insurance premiums (currently \$10 per month for the calendar year 2011).
 2. **Effective January 1, 2012 all persons on Incapacity Leave (current and future) will be required to pay the active personal portion of their applicable insurance coverage.**
 3. **After 30 months (from the date of approval of Incapacity Leave), the participant will be required to pay the applicable personal portion of insurance as well as 25% of the church portion of the premiums. Participants approved on or before July 1, 2011 will be subject to this premium calculation 30 months from July 1, 2011.**
 4. Participation in Medicare **Part A and Part B** is required at the earliest possible date in order to receive **full the best** health insurance benefits. Participants who choose not to participate in Medicare Part B at that date will receive the same contribution towards the health insurance premium as if they were retired.
 5. If the participant is enrolled in Medicare (part A and/or B) due to Incapacity, the Conference health insurance will coordinate benefits with Medicare as primary, the Conference plan as secondary. Family members (with no other coverage) will be covered as primary by the Conference health insurance plan. The Conference health insurance will coordinate with Medicare as primary, the Conference plan as secondary whenever possible.
 6. Upon reaching Medicare eligibility due to age and eligibility to retire, clergy receiving CPP benefits will receive the same contribution towards the health insurance premium as if they were retired.
 7. **Termination policy defined in the Insurance Committee report Section III. 15 will be applicable.**

Ralph Brown, Chairperson

Church Mice



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Conference Guest Speakers

Wednesday/Thursday



Bishop Hope Morgan Ward

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward was raised on the Morgan family farm in northeastern North Carolina in the community of Corapeake. Her home church, Parkers United Methodist Church, is on a three point charge.

She attended Duke University and Duke Divinity School and met her husband, Mike Ward, on a volunteer in mission workteam to Bolivia in 1975. They were married in 1977. Together they served as teaching parents at the Methodist Home for Children in Raleigh.

In the NC Conference, Bishop Ward served as a youth director, Christian educator, pastor, Director of Connectional Ministries and district superintendent. She was elected to the Episcopacy in July 2004, assigned to the Mississippi Conference in 2004 and reassigned in 2008.

Upon her arrival in the fall of 2004, Bishop Ward listened to the laity and clergy of the Mississippi Conference and discerned the heart-songs of the Annual Conference for engagement in ministries of wellness, evangelism, new church planting, mission, racial reconciliation and stewardship.

The conference theme, "Arise, Shine!" is an image for forward movement. In 2010, the focus was evangelism - "Arise, Shine, Grow!" In 2011, the focus is mission - "Arise, Shine, Go!" In 2012, the focus is growing generosity - "Arise, Shine, Give!"

Mike is an educator. He has been a high school teacher, coach, principal, local school superintendent. He was elected NC State Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1997-2004. He is currently on the faculty of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at the University of Southern Mississippi and is active as an advocate for children.

Bishop Ward and Mike have two children, Jason and Brooke. Jason and his wife are professors of American History on the faculty of Mississippi State University. Brooke teaches high school English at Riverside School, an international school in Prague, Czech Republic.

Thursday



Brigadier General William J. ("Jay") Gothard

Deputy Commanding General (Support) / Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Reserve Command

Brigadier General William J. Gothard was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry upon graduation from the University of Dayton. His first assignment was with the 82d Airborne Division, where he served as a Rifle Platoon Leader.

Brigadier General Gothard's next tour was with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) where he served as a Detachment Executive Officer and Detachment Commander. From 1983 to 1987, he served in the Republic of Panama with the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a Detachment Commander, Company Commander, and Assistant Operations Officer.

Upon return to the U.S., Brigadier General Gothard served as the Safety Officer and Chief of the Military Freefall Division, John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. From 1989 until 1992, he served in a classified assignment. Brigadier General Gothard next assignment was with the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command as a Training Evaluation Officer and the Chief, Training and Mobilization Division. He subsequently commanded the 2d Battalion, 321st Regiment, of the 108th Division.

From 2000 to 2002, Brigadier General Gothard served as the Chief, Observer Controller, U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Warfighting Center. He then assumed command of the 7th Brigade, 80th Division (Institution Training) in 2002. In 2004, Brigadier General Gothard was selected as the Operations Officer for the 80th Division (IT). In 2005, he assumed the duties of Chief of Staff, 80th Division (IT), until his deployment to Iraq in January of 2006. Brigadier General Gothard was assigned as the Chief, Division Military Training Team, 5th Division, Iraqi Assistance Group, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, where he

Friday



Laurie Beth Jones

Laurie Beth Jones is an internationally recognized best-selling author, speaker, coach, and trainer. Her business books, written from a spiritual perspective, have received global recognition for the sound, time-proven principles contained within. As a speaker and trainer, she has made presentations to presidents of countries and companies, business teams, government and the judicial system, churches and ministries, service organizations, and educators.

Her first book, *Jesus CEO, Using Ancient Wisdom For Visionary Leadership*, was written when Jones was struck by the notion that Jesus' leadership approach with his staff (disciples) ran counter to many of the management styles and techniques being employed and popularized.

As the owner of a successful marketing company, Jones became increasingly dismayed to find invaluable human energy and intelligence untapped or under-utilized. She made it her goal to help empower people by encouraging them to review the divine excellence in themselves and in those they serve.

In her most recent release, *Jesus, Career Counselor*, she defines the big difference between a job, a career, and work. Oftentimes, doing a job or chasing after a career is something people grudgingly do. On the other hand, she states, "productive and fruitful work is what God intended for us since the Garden of Eden."

Jones was recently named one of the top 30 leaders in the United States by an independent research firm. She has been featured in major media outlets and been invited to speak to business, education, health care, government, faith and service organizations, the mass media and the disenfranchised.

A business-development coach and consultant to CEO's and organizations, Jones has conducted training or provided leadership products for companies including Tyson Foods, Purina-Nestle, Neiman Marcus, Pfizer, CitiFinancial and American Express.

Saturday



Dr. Timothy Tennent

Dr. Timothy C. Tennent took office as president of Asbury Theological Seminary in 2009. Previously he served 11 years as professor of world missions and Indian studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass.

Ordained in The United Methodist Church, he has pastored churches in Georgia, and preached regularly in churches throughout New England and across the country.

He teaches annually at the Luther W. New Jr. Theological College of Dehra Dun, India, where he has served as an adjunct professor since 1989. He has also ministered and taught in China, Thailand, Nigeria and Eastern Europe.

Dr. Tennent is the author of several books, including *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable* and *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology*.

Dr. Tennent is also the author of a missiology textbook *Invitation to World Missions: A Missiology for the 21st Century* published in 2010.

He received his M.Div. in 1984 from Gordon-Conwell; the Th.M. in ecumenics, with a focus on Islam from Princeton Theological Seminary; and did graduate work in linguistics (TESL) at the University of Georgia.

He completed his Ph.D. in non-western Christianity with a focus on Hinduism and Indian Christianity in 1998 at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

He is also one of four graduates from a new leadership development program. The mentor project in academic leadership was developed and supported by the Lexington Seminar (a Lily endowment).

Dr. Tennent's wife Julie (Myers) is an accomplished organist. She graduated from Gordon-Conwell with the M.E.M. degree in 1984 and has a Bachelor of Music degree in organ from Westminster College. They have two children, Jonathan, and Bethany.

Proposed Resolutions - 2011 NC Annual Conference

RESOLUTION 1 AMEND THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE'S PARAGRAPH ON ABORTION (¶161J)

1 WHEREAS, the Church universal through the ages has consistently witnessed
2 and ministered, within the Church and to society, to protect the mother and
3 unborn child from abortion;

4 WHEREAS, the universal Church's witness on life and abortion is represented
5 by The United Methodist Church's stated belief in "the sanctity of unborn
6 human life" and "the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and
7 the unborn child" (The Book of Discipline [2008], ¶161J);

8 WHEREAS, ¶161J, as presently written, has allowed the General Board of
9 Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/Women's
10 Division to support pro-choice law and politics. This clearly contradicts the
11 teaching and practice of the universal Church and The United Methodist
12 Church's equal respect for "the sacredness of the life and well-being of the
13 mother and the unborn child" (The Book of Discipline [2008], ¶161J);

14 WHEREAS, ¶161J is morally inconsistent because it speaks of "the unborn
15 child" and yet supports laws that permit abortion, which takes the life of the
16 unborn child;

17 WHEREAS, the 2008 Book of Discipline's ¶161J, as amended below, can lead
18 The United Methodist Church to rejoin historic Christianity's teaching on life
19 and abortion in aspiring to protect the unborn child and mother;

20 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2011 session of the North Carolina
21 Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby charges its
22 Conference Secretary, using the rationale stated above, to petition, in a timely
23 and appropriate manner, the 2012 General Conference to amend ¶161J of The
24 Book of Discipline to read:

25 "J) Abortion --The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given
26 boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree
27 of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to
28 determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in
29 the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion.

30 But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being
31 of the mother and the unborn child.

32 We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and
33 in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical
34 procedures. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult
35 notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have
36 not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot affirm abortion as an
37 acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means
38 of gender selection.

39 We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction
40 (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the
41 physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is
42 available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. Before
43 providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women
44 the option of anesthesia.

45 We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of
46 conditions that may cause them to consider abortion.

47 The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We
48 commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who
49 terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to
50 those who give birth.

51 We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service
52 agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See ¶ 161L.) We
53 affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy
54 centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find
55 feasible alternatives to abortion.

56 Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required
57 by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning
58 abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration
59 by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate
60 counsel." (The Book of Discipline [2008])

61 Submitted by Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth
62 (pastor of St. Peter's United Methodist Church, Morehead City, NC)

RESOLUTION 2 RESOLUTION AND PETITION TO GENERAL CONFERENCE ALL OUR CHILDREN: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RACIAL DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1 WHEREAS, systematic efforts are underway to eliminate socio-economic and
2 racial diversity in public schools in North Carolina; and

3 WHEREAS, evidence and experience unequivocally demonstrate that
4 eliminating socioeconomic and racial diversity has the effect of re-segregating
5 public schools and surrounding communities, thereby further disadvantaging
6 poor and minority students, as well as depriving all public school students of
7 the benefits of cultural, racial and economic diversity in public schools; and

8 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has a long history of concern for
9 social justice and protection of the voiceless "least of these," including all
10 children, and especially economically disadvantaged and minority children; and

11 WHEREAS, John Wesley, credited with launching free public schools on a
12 widespread basis, established Methodism's deep commitment to protecting and
13 promoting the best interests of impoverished children; and

14 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church's Social Principles declare that the
15 Church affirms "all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God," and is to "work
16 toward societies in which each person's value is recognized, maintained, and
17 strengthened" (Social Community, ¶162); and

18 WHEREAS, The Church acknowledges children "to be full human beings
19 in their own right,... to whom adults and society in general have special
20 obligations. Thus, we support the development of school systems and
21 innovative methods of education designed to assist every child toward
22 complete fulfillment as an individual person of worth. All children have the
23 right to quality education...." (Rights of Children)

24 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church acknowledges that while
25 "responsibility for education of the young rests with the family, the church,
26 and the government," in our society, "this function can best be fulfilled
27 through public policies that ensure access for all persons to free public
28 elementary and secondary schools" (Education); and

29 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church supports the basic right of all
30 children to equal opportunities for education and training of the highest
31 quality, and deplores harmful acts based on race, ethnicity, or economic status
32 (Social Community, ¶162, Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons); and

33 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church declares that institutional racism
34 plagues and cripples our growth in Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to
35 the gospel itself (Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons), and in order to provide
36 quality education, resources must be shared more equitably (Poverty); and

37 WHEREAS, The Church claims all economic and institutional systems to be

38 under the judgment of God, no less than other facets of the created order, and
39 supports efforts to eliminate governmental programs that benefit the wealthy
40 at the expense of other persons (Economic Community, ¶163); and

41 WHEREAS, evidence demonstrates that the systematic elimination of
42 socio-economic and racial diversity in public schools will --and does-- have the
43 effect of re-segregating not only schools but neighborhoods, contributing to
44 an increase in drop-out rates among disadvantaged students, loss of property
45 values, and an increase in crime, harming the entire community; and

46 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church acknowledges that based on their
47 race and wealth, certain persons are unfairly granted privileges and benefits
48 that are denied to racial minorities and to the poor, and that it is appropriate
49 for the Church to declare society's "obligation to address the inequalities
50 and discriminatory practices within...society," and to call on our government
51 to "implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing,
52 systemic social deprivation" (Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons, Economic
53 Community, ¶163); and

54 WHEREAS, evidence demonstrates that public school policies that encourage
55 socio-economic and racial integration and diversity are a successful example
56 of such innovative, compensatory programs that address inequalities and
57 discriminatory practices in education and which equitably share resources to
58 promote a quality public school education for all students; and

59 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church supports diversity, rejoicing in
60 the "gifts that particular ethnic histories and cultures bring to our total life"
61 (Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons); and

62 WHEREAS, re-segregating public schools along racial and economic lines will
63 unfairly distribute public school resources to the advantage of students from
64 wealthier families and to the disadvantage of minority and poor students, the
65 "least of these" Christians are called upon to protect; and

66 WHEREAS, United Methodists "hold governments responsible for the
67 protection of the rights of the people to Y adequate Y education" (Political
68 Community, ¶164, Basic Freedoms and Human Rights); and

69 WHEREAS, The Church should "continually exert a strong ethical influence
70 upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and
71 opposing policies and programs that are unjust" (Political Responsibility);

Proposed Resolutions *continued from page 23*

RESOLUTION 2 CONTINUED

72 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Carolina Conference of The United
73 Methodist Church declares that the integration of our human diversity in our
74 communities and in our public schools is a fundamental religious, social, and moral
75 value and an inherent social good;

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, aware of the history and present reality of
77 racial and economic disparities in North Carolina communities, and informed
78 by expert studies on public school diversity, abandoning socio-economic and
79 racial integration of public school students will in fact lead to a re-segregation
80 of our schools and communities, leading to numerous social and moral harms;

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, policies that lead to re-segregation are
82 contrary to the basic principles of our faith, contrary to the Bible's tradition

83 of compassion and care for all children, and are contrary to our religion's
84 teachings on social justice, and therefore are opposed by the Church;

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Carolina Conference of The United
86 Methodist Church calls on governmental entities at the federal, state and local
87 level to promote, and not abandon, destroy, or dismantle programs that foster
88 socio-economic and racial integration and diversity in public schools.

89 The North Carolina Board of Church and Society
90 and
91 The Methodist Federation for Social Action
92 North Carolina Annual Conference Chapter

RESOLUTION 3 RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EFFECTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PEACEMAKING BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS THROUGH POSITIVE INVESTMENT IN PALESTINE

1 The United Methodist Church has committed itself to peacemaking and seeks to
2 act as an advocate for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United Meth-
3 odist Church recognizes that true peace must reveal itself in both the spiritual
4 and temporal aspects of life and culture in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

5 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church "affirms the right and duty of people
6 of all nations to determine their own destiny," (Social Principles, ¶ 65 B), the
7 preferred solution to this conflict is the creation of two independent sovereign
8 nations, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and in economic justice
9 and cooperation. (Social Principles, ¶165 B & C).

10 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has long supported economic justice,
11 we recognize that a viable Palestinian state must have a sustainable financial foun-
12 dation. To this end, we support positive financial investment for the Palestinians.
13 We also recognize that, at present, the Palestinian civil society must build may the
14 economic base and infrastructure necessary for fully fledged statehood.

15 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church values the transformative nature of
16 economic justice for all people, we support positive investment in Palestine as
17 an effective and productive approach to peace making for both Israelis and the
18 Palestinians. In this case in particular, we believe that encouraging investments
19 in Palestine is a positive, transformative strategy to be preferred to the more
20 punitive options of divestment, and boycotts. Boycott, divestment and eco-
21 nomic sanction campaigns focus on combating perceived enemies and punishing
22 and blaming one side in a complex conflict, rather than promoting constructive
23 solutions to the conflict and improving the lives of Palestinians.

24 THEREFORE, The United Methodist Church:

25 1. Affirms the 2008 General Conference in its rejection of boycott, divestment
26 or economic sanctions as a just or effective way of resolving the Israeli/Pal-
27 estinian conflict and creating a peaceful two-state solution;

28 2. Acknowledges that the Church must seize the current opportunity to deter-
29 mine how best to act as a peacemaker in Israel-Palestine in the current his-
30 torical context --and not fan the flames of conflict by adopting approaches
31 such as boycott, divestment and economic sanctions which are ultimately
32 destructive to peacemaking in Israel and Palestine because they seek primar-
33 ily to punish and blame one side in a complex conflict, rather than serving
34 the purpose of encouraging reconciliation and raising both people up;

35 3. Affirms strategies that will help bring about an independent, sovereign Pales-
36 tinian state as well as peace, prosperity and security for both Palestinians and
37 Israelis. This strategy includes investment in Palestine and support of posi-
38 tive economic growth.

39 4. Recognizes that the work of nation-building is necessary and productive and
40 without it there can and will be no viable Palestinian state;

41 5. Commits to study and make recommendations for concrete measures that
42 can be taken by the Church, Church Boards, Agencies, and Church mem-
43 bers to encourage, aid and assist the Palestinian people in their efforts in
44 nation building.

45 North Carolina Conference Board of Church and Society

RESOLUTION 4 RESOLUTION TO WITHDRAW THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FROM THE RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

1 WHEREAS, the position of The United Methodist Church concerning abortion
2 (The Book of Discipline [2008], ¶ 161J) lays out a politically moderate position
3 where "the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve
4 abortion," where "we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life
5 and well-being of the mother and the unborn child" while allowing that "tragic
6 conflicts of life with life" may justify, with prayerful consideration involved,
7 the legal option of abortion. Our position includes faithful restraints to
8 abortion such as supporting parental notification for minors and opposing
9 abortion as a means of birth control, gender selection, and the procedure of
10 partial-birth abortion (with rare exceptions). Our position also encourages
11 adoption and affirms ministries that provide compassionate, feasible
12 alternatives to abortion.

13 WHEREAS, we are a full member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive
14 Choice (RCRC, originally named the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights), a
15 group of affiliated religious groups that actively pursues a political agenda that
16 is in opposition to any moderation or restriction of abortion rights;

17 WHEREAS, RCRC, in its "Words of Choice: Countering Anti-Choice Rhetoric"
18 (www.rcrc.org/pdf/Words_of_Choice.pdf), argues against the following words,
19 phrases, and moral claims found in our position: "abortion as...birth control,"
20 "[abortion] as...gender selection," "adoption," "crisis pregnancy centers,"
21 "mother," "notification and consent," "partial-birth abortion" opposition,
22 "sacredness of...life," "sanctity of... life," and "unborn child;"

23 WHEREAS, RCRC states its opposition to the restrictions we support by
24 framing our position incorrectly and offensively. For instance, it names those
25 that oppose partial-birth abortion as being engaged in a "propaganda war
26 against women," and that support for parental notification is a campaign
27 "masquerading as parental rights" (<http://rcrc.org/about/faq.cfm>). On
28 our own UM GBCS website, RCRC President and CEO Carlton Veazey
29 states that, contrary to these restrictions in the Discipline, "[e]ach new
30 barrier to exercising reproductive rights is a setback to women's freedom
31 and equality." ("Sex and the church," [http://www.umcgbcs.org/site/c.](http://www.umcgbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.3794227/apps/s/content.asp?ct=8157575)
32 [frLJK2PKLqF/b.3794227/apps/s/content.asp?ct=8157575](http://www.umcgbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.3794227/apps/s/content.asp?ct=8157575))

33 WHEREAS, the "members of our denomination are not of one mind over the

34 precise conditions in which abortion can be supported" (#2027, The Book of
35 Resolutions [2008], p. 123), and therefore agencies of The United Methodist
36 Church should not be permitted to join a political lobby for abortion, such as RCRC;

37 WHEREAS, other mainline denominations, with positions on abortion similar
38 to that of The United Methodist Church, have either never chosen to be
39 members of RCRC (e.g., the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the
40 Disciples of Christ) or severed past ties with RCRC (American Baptist Churches
41 USA and the Northern Province of the Moravian Church);

42 WHEREAS, through the connection of the UMC, we are deeply involved in
43 leading the RCRC. An organization can be an "endorsing member" of RCRC or
44 go beyond endorsement to be on the Council of Governors. Both the General
45 Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/
46 Women's Division are members of the RCRC's Council of Governors. Further,
47 on RCRC's Board of Directors, both the Chair of the Council of Governors and
48 the Secretary of the Board are from UMC Boards or Agencies. (<http://rcrc.org/about/members.cfm>)

50 WHEREAS, by our membership in the RCRC, The United Methodist Church
51 connection which we prayerfully and financially support is being unequally
52 yoked with advocacy to positions in direct conflict with the positions stated in
53 the Discipline;

54 THEREFORE be it resolved that the 2011 session of the North Carolina Annual
55 Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby charges its Conference
56 Secretary to forward this resolution, in a timely and appropriate manner, to
57 the 2012 General Conference to withdraw immediately from membership in
58 the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) any Board, Agency
59 or Official of The United Methodist Church-including, but not limited to,
60 the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global
61 Ministries/Women's Division.

62 Respectfully submitted, Rev. Paul Dunham, Elder in Full Connection,
63 serving Farmville United Methodist Church (Greenville District)

See "Proposed Resolutions," page 25

Proposed Resolutions *continued from page 24*

RESOLUTION 5 RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NEGOTIATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- 1 WHEREAS, both Israel and Palestinians have historic claim to what is known as
- 2 the Holy Land; and
- 3 WHEREAS, both Israel and Palestine have legitimate histories of having been
- 4 oppressed and mistreated, including the Holocaust and being forced to live in
- 5 refugee camps for decade upon decade; and
- 6 WHEREAS, both Israel and Palestine have engaged in conduct not in keeping with
- 7 the highest ideals of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, including rocket attacks,
- 8 suicide bombings, aggressive housing settlements, and onerous security measures;

- 9 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Carolina Conference of The
- 10 United Methodist Church implores both Israel and the Palestinian Authority
- 11 to re-enter into negotiations with the following goals: peace for all peoples
- 12 in the region, the preservation of Jewish and Palestinian identity, and the
- 13 protection of the Christian population in the Holy Land.

14
15

North Carolina Conference
Board of Church and Society

Report of the Task Force on District Superintendency

In the State of the Church address to the 2009 Annual Conference, Bishop Gwinn announced the formation of a Task Force to Study the Superintendency in the North Carolina Annual Conference. The purpose of the task force was to consider more efficient and effective ways for District Superintendents to fulfill their ministries in the 21st century. Specific attention was to be devoted to enabling ministries of teaching, mentoring, coaching, vision-casting, and team building among the churches and pastors of the districts.

The task force was named in late summer of 2009 and began its work in the fall. Over the past eighteen months, the task force has met on numerous occasions. The process engaged by the task force included:

- ◆ Surveying the current Cabinet to determine what hinders or facilitates their work of coaching, mentoring, team-building, vision casting, and teaching
- ◆ Theological reflection on the nature of ministry in the Wesleyan tradition, particularly the ministry of superintendency, its evolution over the history of the denomination, and an emphasis on leadership of a movement rather than institutional management
- ◆ Conversation with other Annual Conferences who have recently redesigned their work of superintendency and an examination of the different “models” of superintendency currently being implemented across the connection
- ◆ Reading and discussing together a report to the Lilly Endowment on “The District Superintendency in The United Methodist Church” authored by Dr. William Lawrence, dean of Perkins School of Theology
- ◆ A review of the responsibilities of the district superintendent as outlined in *The Book of Discipline*, 2008 ¶ 420-424
- ◆ A comparative study of the composition of districts in the other annual conferences of the Southeastern Jurisdiction
- ◆ A review of the North Carolina Conference’s history of adding districts over the past forty five years

After a season of study and discussion, the task force agreed that the guiding principle of its recommendations would be the missional needs of the local churches of the Annual Conference and not financial implications. There will be cost savings to the Annual Conference of approximately \$380,000.00 annually in the recommendations; however the task force considers these to be a secondary, not a primary, benefit.

The task force considered a number of proposals, ranging from slight and incremental change to a more radical and deep change. We acknowledge that there are significant details yet to be resolved should our recommendations be adopted. We believed our task to be the creation of a vision which others would implement.

Conference Speakers: Gothard *from page 22*

was the Senior U.S. Advisor.

Upon return from his tour in Iraq, Brigadier General Gothard served as the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, for the 80th Training Command (Total Army School System).

Selected for promotion and command in 2007, Brigadier General Gothard assumed command of the 353d Civil Affairs Command.

Brigadier General Gothard currently serves as the Deputy Commanding General (Support) and Chief of Staff, United States Army Reserve Command.

His military education includes the Infantry Officer’s Basic and Advanced

Courses, the Civil Affairs Officer Advanced Course, the Special Forces Qualification Course, the Army’s Command and General Staff Officer’s Course, the Advanced Program Management Course, the U.S. Air Force Air War College and the U.S. Army War College. He also graduated from the Airborne, Ranger, Jumpmaster, and Military Freefall Courses.

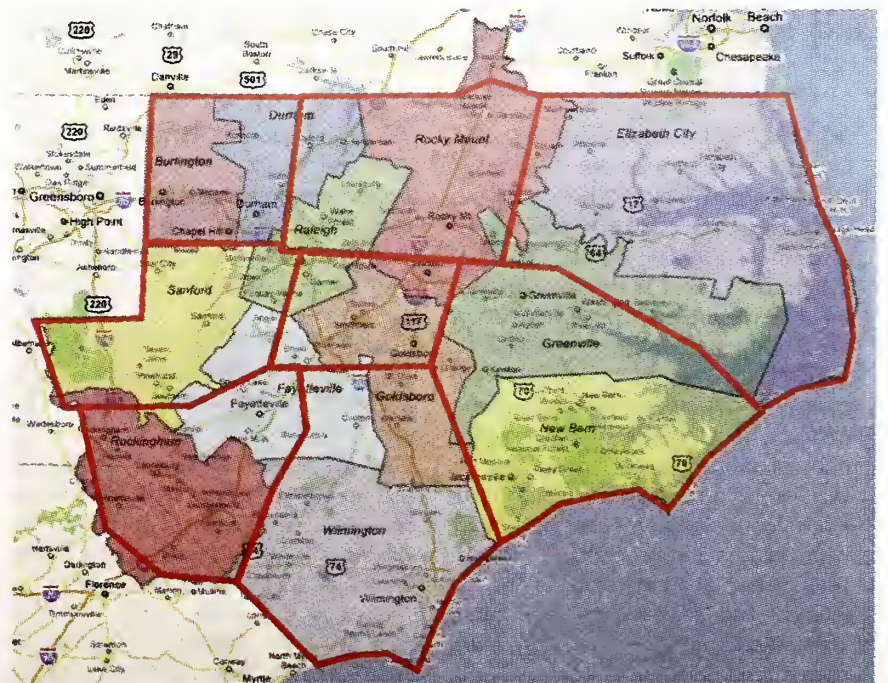
Brigadier General Gothard holds a MA degree in Management from Webster University, a MSS degree in National Security Studies from the U.S. Army War College, and a certificate in National Security Management from Syracuse University.

The Task Force unanimously offers the following recommendations to the 2011 Annual Conference:

1. That the North Carolina Annual Conference affirms that the primary tasks of the district superintendents are coaching, mentoring, teaching, team-building, and vision casting and that the superintendents must be freed for relationship building among congregations and pastors for those tasks.
2. That the number of districts be reduced from twelve to eight (*The Book of Discipline* reserves to the Bishop, in consultation with the Cabinet, the setting of the district lines subsequent to the Annual Conference setting the number – see ¶ 415.4).
3. That each district have a full-time administrative assistant to handle all non-appointive and non-judicial administrative matters related to the work of the district, thus freeing the superintendent for more time in the charges and with the pastors.
4. That the Bishop name a transition team to assist the various districts in matters of transfer of property and assets, and creating new district boards and agencies.
5. That it is the stated expectation of the conference that the district superintendent will be in each charge at least annually, but that it is no longer necessary for the superintendent personally to conduct each Charge Conference in the district.
6. That it is not the expectation of this Annual Conference that all superintendents must be present at all conference events and gatherings.
7. That each superintendent serve on no more than one conference board or agency and that no conference board or agency have more than one superintendent as a member.
8. That district offices be relocated out of the district parsonages where this is still the practice.

Respectfully submitted by the Bishop’s Task Force on Superintendency:

Carl Frazier, chair; Brenda Brown; Christine Dodson; Cashar Evans; Leonard Fairley; Ray Gooch; Randy Innes; Herbert Lowry; Linda Taylor



The Task Force on Superintendency is recommending the elimination of the current 12 districts and that eight new districts be formed. The red lines above are suggestions of what an eight district conference might look like. The Annual Conference determines the number of districts, and the bishop determines how they are formed. Bishop Gwinn said “any new district lines will only be decided after consultation with lay and clergy leaders as well as local congregations.”



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

July 3, 2011

Text: Joshua 7:1, 10-12, 22-26
"God Reacts to Disobedience"

It doesn't seem right. One soldier among the thousands in the Israelite army violated the covenant and yet the whole nation suffered. Joshua 7:1 begins by saying that "...the Israelites broke faith in regard to devoted things."

The Israelites? Surely the writer meant to say that one man among the Israelites broke faith, but that is not what the text says.

Because one man, Achan, was unfaithful, the entire people are considered culpable. (Joshua 7:1) God's reaction of anger was against the entire nation. Bummer.

In our twenty-first century culture, rampant individualism has led us to assume that what is best for me is the best of all choices. The other side of that thought is the cliché that "if I do something wrong, I am only hurting myself."

Have you heard someone say that "playing the lottery is just my way to have fun; it does not affect anyone else"? Such an attitude finds no

importance in the social consequences of a lottery: a system that drains the poor for the entertainment of the "have's."

This week's text is a reminder that "we are in this together." Last March during the height of the terror of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, I read an article in which an observer wondered why there was so little looting in Japan during that time of vulnerability. The author offered several explanations, but one of them was the reality of a Japanese tradition of community.

Although some persons in our western culture see the Japanese as "human robots," the writer saw respect for the community as being of major social benefit.

This account in Joshua seems cruel with punishment appearing to be far in excess of the crime of stealing: Achan and his family are stoned to death and then burned (Joshua 7:25).

The extremity of the punishment is not so much because Achan has kept some of the military booty for himself (Joshua 7:24), but because in so doing he has broken faith with the community.

To steal for one's personal gain is one thing, but to abuse the community makes one drastically guilty.

Throughout the Scripture, God takes community very seriously (Exodus 13:14, Deuteronomy 9:5, Jeremiah 31:1, Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 2:14, Revelation 7:9).

adult J u l y B I B L E S T U D Y

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

This week's lesson depicts God's anger when one fails to do so.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Parker J. Palmer has written (Henry French, ed., *40-Day Journey with Parker J. Palmer*, Augsburg): "The path is too deeply hidden to be traveled without company...the destination is too daunting to be achieved alone."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Bind us together, Lord..."

July 10, 2011

Text: Judges 2:11-19
"Listen to God's Judges"

There is a story for which the punch line is "...but I sent you a helicopter, a boat, and a life jacket." Do you remember the story? It's too long to tell here, but ask someone—maybe your pastor—to tell you the whole thing.

Sometimes we do not pay attention to what God is saying because we do not recognize the messenger.

Sometimes we do not pay attention to what God is saying because the message is one that will change "what I have always thought."

Sometimes we do not pay attention to what God is saying because it calls us to love persons whom we find it easier to hate.

The Book of Judges is a series of accounts of how the people of God

alternated between listening to God's messenger and ignoring what the messenger said.

The judges were wise leaders whom God empowered to speak insight and direction (Judges 2:16, 18).

Once the charismatic judge was gone, the people abandoned everything they had heard and learned and returned to easy, cultural religion (Judges 2:19).

Consider Judge 2:19. Do Presbyterians still remember what John Calvin taught?

Do United Methodists still live out the principles of John Wesley?

Do Lutherans still have the passion for reformation that Martin Luther had?

Do Baptists still have the selfless spirit of Lottie Moon?

Do Pentecostals still have the vigor of a transformed life such as Nicky Cruz?

God is continuing to send persons to lead God's people. Sometimes it is a voice that challenges the status quo. Sometimes it is a voice that calms a frantic moment. Sometimes it is a voice that offers a glimpse of God's coming kingdom.

Do we pay attention?

What Someone Else Is Saying:

In Mike Krzyzewski's *Leading with the Heart* (Warner Books), basketball star Grant Hill writes: "When I was very young, my father used to tell me that an army of deer led by a lion will defeat an army of lions led by a deer."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Merciful God, we have tried to hear Your voice amid the competing sounds of this age. Give us open hearts as well as open ears. Bless us with leaders who bring the spirit and truth of the judges of ancient Israel..."

July 17, 2011

Text: Judges 3:15-25, 29-30
"Use God's Strength"

Truth to tell, it is hard to clean up this week's study text. In brief, it is about a man who hid a sword and then used the weapon to kill a king. Some scholars get graphic in describing the scene: perhaps the king was slain while he was on the toilet (Judges 3:20, 24); in any case, the sword was

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July Adult Bible study *continued from page 26*

left in the king because it disappeared completely into the fat flesh (Judges 3:17, 22) and the contents of the colon poured out, delicately referred to as "dirt" in most translations (Judges 3:22). We have to hold our noses for more than one reason when reviewing these verses!

What does this strange text have to do with the Gospel?

I am reminded of Bishop C. P. Minnick's account of a woman who asked at every Bible study he led, regardless of the topic, "What does this have to do with John 3:16?"

Indeed.

What does this passage from Judges have to do with the "God who so loved the world"?

Various study guides will suggest various understandings of this account: God protects God's people; God is stronger than evil; God answers prayer; God's justice ultimately triumphs.

I want to add another possibility: God is able to use us even when we are at our worst.

Ehud was a sneak (Judges 3:19). Ehud was a liar (Judges 3:20). Ehud was a murderer (Judges 3:21). Ehud was conniving (Judges 3:23).

These are hardly the highest moral values. Even in wartime, it is considered wrong to kill unarmed persons.

But God was able to use the sneaking, lying, murdering, conniving Ehud to bring peace to God's people (Judges 3:30). God took the shabbiness of Ehud's moral fiber and turned it into victory.

This is no plea for us to turn from morality in the hope that God will use our sleaziness to carry the day.

It is a reminder that when we have done the best we can by the best lights we have, God is able, God is able.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *A Secular Age* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) Charles Taylor says: "...Methodists or Pentecostals, whose ability to meet the disciplines of contemporary life is bound up with Christian conversion, so that an order-sustaining morality is felt as inseparable from faith."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of all generations, help us, when we reach back into the people and places of the past, to find Your presence, and in finding Your presence there to begin to find Your presence among us even now. Clear us from the congealed spirit that has no room for growth; save us from our frailty of hope and our emptiness of trust..."

July 24, 2011

Text: Judges 7:2-4, 13-15; 8:22-25
"Let God Rule"

This text is about Gideon. For many persons, the quickest reference to Gideon is to the organization renowned for its energy in distributing Bibles around the world. Local churches sometimes have speakers from The Gideons.

Many of us have found the "Gideon Bible" in hotel rooms, something of a constant for the traveler.

Gideons International, founded in 1899, took its name from the key character in Judges 6-7. Small wonder.

Gideon was a man who did a lot with a little. His family was described as the weakest in the region (Judges 7:15). Gideon saw himself as the least gifted, the least prepared in this feeble family (Judges 7:15).

When Gideon finally went to battle, he had only three hundred soldiers, instead of the twenty-two thousand he had at the beginning (Judges 7:3, 8). And he won.

No, that is not quite the right way to say it. God called on Gideon to reduce the size of the army just to avoid such a claim that "we won it." (Judges 7:2).

Credit did not belong to Gideon; credit belonged to God. The verses throughout this chapter make it clear: God is in charge—Judges 7:4, 7, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22.

It is a false humility to say that I am not (choose your word) worthy, skilled, informed, experienced, trained, talented enough to be used by God. Gideon tried that approach (Judges 7:15).

God knew better. God called Gideon to the task and then laid a blessing on him. To God be the glory!

What might God be calling you to do? Don't be quick to say "No."

Moses tried that (Exodus 3:11). Jonah tried that (Jonah 1:3). Jeremiah tried that (Jeremiah 1:6). Amos tried that (Amos 7:14). Gideon tried that (Judges 7:15).

It doesn't work. Saying "no" to God does not work.

What might God be calling you to do? To "beg off" because you think you are not good enough, ready enough, rich enough, gifted enough might be a backhanded way of saying, "God, I don't think You are up to it." The Church helps us all test the call.

Whether it be a conference board of ordained ministry or a local church

committee on lay personnel or a plea from a Sunday School class who needs a teacher, the Church can help you discern what God is calling you to do.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Robert Cushman (*Faith Seeking Understanding*, Duke University Press) wrote: "...the real safekeeping of the gospel is in its publication in and through endless service to the world. So that the authentic role of the church in all ages is neither that of sanctuary nor that of custodian, but that of missionary-servant."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Who, me, Lord? Okay, I listen..."

July 31, 2011

Text: Judges 10:10-18
"Return to Obedience"

In Judges 10:15, the Israelites beg God to *deliver* them from their sin-induced distress.

In Judges 10:11, God reminds Israel of how God has *delivered* them on several occasions.

In Judges 10:13, God says that "I will *deliver* you no more."

There is an interesting difference in the Hebrew word translated "deliver" in verse 15 and the Hebrew word translated "deliver" in verses 11 and 13.

When God speaks of how God has "delivered" Israel from past crises (v. 11), the word for "deliver" is *yasha'*, a word that means "deliver" in the sense of making safe, preserving, or setting free.

But notice the word used for "deliver" in the fervent cry of the Israelites in verse 15: it is *natsal*, a word that means "deliver" in the sense of snatching up or plucking up.

Maybe I am making too fine a point of this, but it strikes me that God speaks of deliverance as a process by which one is saved, by which one is made safe.

The Israelites' demand (in Judges 10:15) is a plea for "doing something and doing it right now."

It is the contrast between "preserving" and "snatching up."

It is the contrast between "in Your good time, Lord" and "I want it and I want it now!"

There is a temptation even in thoughtful prayers to ask God to work on our timetable, not on God's timetable.

There are occasions when God has indeed acted with swiftness, with immediacy. But there are also times when God sees a forty-year wandering in the wilderness before delivering God's people.

I know someone who took her driver's license exam eight times before she got the permit to drive.

Did she want the license the first time? The second time? The third time?

Of course, she did.

But the examiners had a better understanding of when she was ready to drive. The examiners had wisdom in delaying granting that all important paper.

God's wisdom sometimes means that the deliverance promised by God seems slow in coming.

As a hymn in one of old hymnals said: "Not so in haste, my heart. Have faith in God and wait. Although He linger long; He never comes too late."

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport*—yes, that's the title! (Zondervan), Richard Mouw has written: "The Mennonites have a nice phrase. They say we are presently living 'in the time of God's patience.'...So we are in a time of waiting, of longing for the day when the rule of God will be made obvious to all creatures."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Deliver us, O Lord...in Your time..."

conference CALENDAR

June

- 15 - 18 Annual Conference
- 19 Peace with Justice Sunday
- 20 - 25 Summer Breakaway
- 22 - 24 Celebrating Charles Wesley and Frank Baker; Duke Divinity School
- 25 - July 2 Appalachian Trail Hike
- 28 Pastor's Moving Day

July

- 3 First Sunday in new pulpit
- 18-23 Youth ACS, Methodist University, Fayetteville
- 20-23 School of Christian Mission

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around the CONFERENCE



Sharon UMC - Resurrection cross

During the Easter Sunday worship service, the congregation of Sharon United Methodist Church at Poplar Branch, celebrated the risen Christ by transforming the barren cross into a cross of colorful butterflies designed by members of the church. (Photo by the Rev. C. Renee Edwards)



Greater Heights UMC receives Faith in Action Award for work with Raleigh Community and Safety Club

Greater Heights UMC in Clayton (Johnston County) was presented the "Faith in Action" Award by Passage Home at the Congregations-Corporations-Community Breakfast on April 27.

Greater Heights is the first United Methodist congregation to receive the award and the first outside Wake County.

The award was given in recognition of the church's work with the Raleigh Community and Safety Club, adoption of two apartments for formerly homeless families, aiding and housing women who are recently released from prison, and

other community aid that helps prevent poverty and creates economic self-sufficiency.

Greater Heights is a new church start founded in 2007. The people of Greater Heights seek to

Passage Home is a nationally recognized faith-based nonprofit community development corporation that fights poverty and homelessness by strengthening families and neighborhoods.

They focus on supporting positive change through programs in four areas: housing and support services, economic development, youth development, and neighborhood revitalization.

Swansboro UMC commissions new Stephen Ministers

Swansboro UMC held a commissioning service May 15th recognizing the completion of 20 weeks of study by its newest Stephen Ministers: Bill Baker, Patsy Crawford, Joel



Harrod, Ken Harrod and Al Krutulewski. Since 1997, the church has trained over 50 Stephen Ministers and Leaders to support the pastors in caring for the congregation. Pictured: Patsy Crawford, Rev. Rachel Moser, Bill Baker, Dr. Ed Gunter, Joel Harrod, Ken Harrod, Dave Johnson (Training Leader), and Al Krutulewski. (Photo by Lindo Johnson)

Oleander UMC - Youth evangelism

Contemporary, organized religions are now evangelizing with email, web sites, Twitter, Facebook and Youtube, but the Youth Team of the Oleander UMC is sending messages in a recyclable plastic bottle dropped into the Gulf Stream 47 miles off Carolina Beach. The youth assembled Bible verse messages, pictures of themselves and other messages along with the front page of a recent edition of the Star News.

At dawn on Saturday, May 14, Captain Bob Stone of Southern Cross Charters, embarked on a fishing trip and sailed to the Gulf Stream to drop the bottle into the fast flowing waters of the Gulf Stream. Included in the bottle are personal messages and contact information with the objective that someone in the southern hemisphere of the Atlantic Ocean, or perhaps the Gulf of Mexico, will retrieve the bottle and its contents and respond.

Shown at the dock are: (L-R) Daylon Jones, Tyler Perry, Youth Team Co-Leader James Jones, Josh Jones, Capt. Bill Stone, Co-Leader Lisa Jones and Autumn Beasley.



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2011 North Carolina Annual Conference Overview

By Bill Norton, Reggie Ponder, and Taylor Mills *

Using the theme "A Future with Hope: Leading to Christ," the North Carolina Annual Conference met June 15-18 in Raleigh. It was a time for resetting baselines for the purpose of refocusing on the Mission of the Church, moving away from a preoccupation with money, and placing more emphasis on bringing people into a relationship with Jesus Christ through vital congregations.

The gathering in Raleigh was the first time the conference has met in the Capital City since The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 when The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged. For five years the conference met in Greenville. Before meeting in Greenville in 2006, the conference met in Fayetteville for 32 years.

Acts 2 churches and new faith communities

Fifty-four churches, recommended by districts from local congregations, were recognized as demonstrating health and vitality. These churches exhibited radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional spiritual formation, and risk-taking mission and ministry to the world. Other churches have received the recognition in other years. (See page 5)

Ten new faith communities were recognized during the conference. Five represent multi-site campuses of existing congregations. (See page 5)

In addition, 13 new communities have begun over the last five years. Of those 13, 10 are continuing. They were cited as

being "dynamic, high-impact faith communities reaching new, different, and younger people and seeing lives transformed," said Jeff Severt, executive director of New Faith Communities.

Eight new districts

Conference members approved the elimination of 12 districts and the creation of eight new districts. The Task Force on Superintendency recommended the change. "The goal of the task force work is to better assist local congregations in their efforts to focus on the drivers of vitality and ministry action plans," said Bishop Al Gwinn.

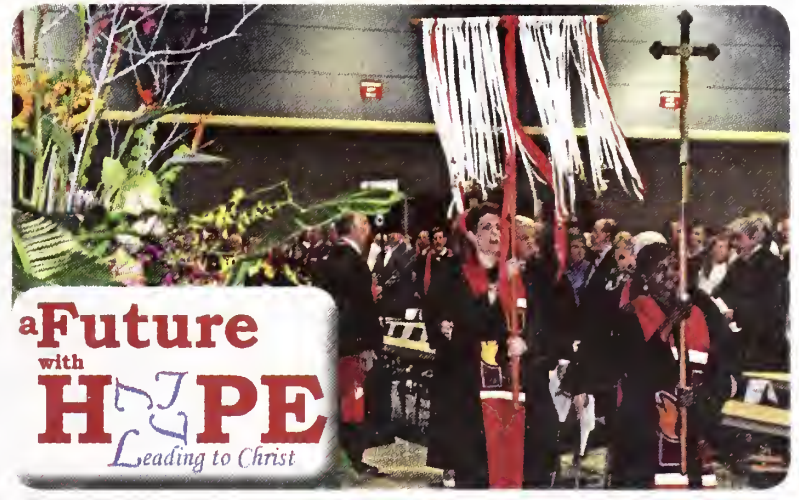
The change, estimated as having a \$380,000 savings for the conference, will be effective following the 2012 Annual Conference.

It provides that district superintendents will have more time for coaching, mentoring, vision casting and team-building, no district office will be located in the superintendent's parsonage, and each district will have a full-time administrative

events and gatherings, and the superintendent does not have to be present for all Charge Conferences but will be in each charge at least annually.

Bishop Gwinn will appoint a transition team to assist in the transfer of property and assets of the current 12 districts. The Bishop and Cabinet determine the new district lines. "Any new district lines will only be decided after consultation with

See "Annual Conference," page 5



The cross and tintinnabulum, representing the Holy Spirit and the communion of Saints, led the processional for the service of commissioning and ordination during Annual Conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)



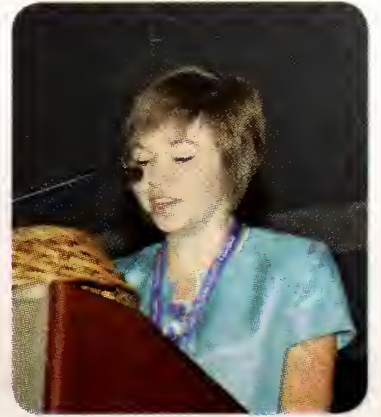
Jerusalem UMC Youth Choir, Laurinburg, sang during the Opening Worship on Wednesday evening. (Photo by Reggie Ponder)



LEFT AND BELOW: After a long day of presentations and debate, Bishop Gwinn and conference members enjoyed a light-hearted moment blowing bubbles as part of a presentation on the programs and camper scholarships offered by NC UM Camp and Retreat Ministries. (Photos by Reggie Ponder)



LEFT: BG General William J. Gothard, deputy commanding general (support)/chief of staff, US Army Reserve Command at Fort Bragg presented the report on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Gothard is a member of Haymount UMC in Fayetteville. (Photo by Bill Norton)



RIGHT: Sidney Evans, conference United Methodist Youth president, presented the report for youth during the Celebration of the Laity on Friday. (Photo by Reggie Ponder)



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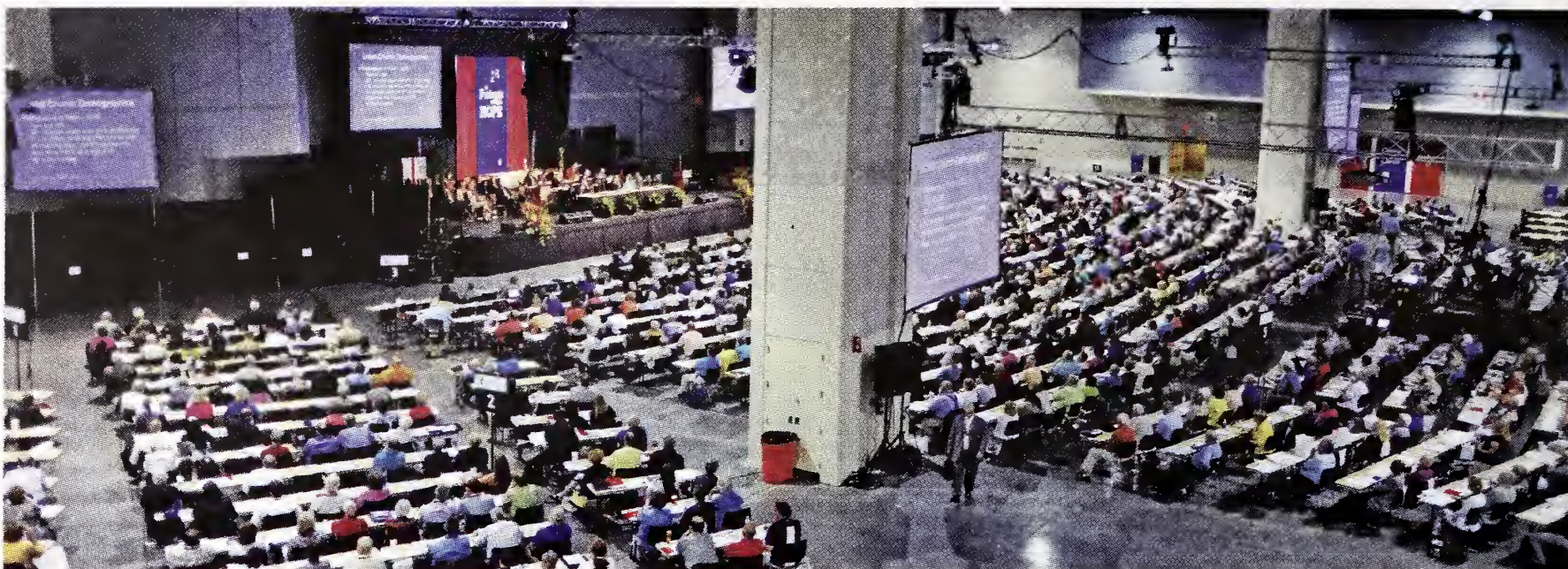


Exhibit Hall B, where the 2011 Annual Conference was held in the Raleigh Convention Center, contained almost twice the space used last year in Greenville. Five video screens were used to assist conference members in seeing and following speakers and programs on the stage. Fifteen microphones were placed throughout the hall so members, when recognized by Bishop Al Gwinn, could make a motion or respond to some other matter before the conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Meeting in Raleigh Convention Center receives mixed reviews

By Reggie Ponder *

Clergy and lay members of the North Carolina Annual Conference had a variety of opinions on the location of this year's conference. The conference was held June 15-18 at the Raleigh Convention Center. While the convention center staff got accolades for its service, members did not agree on whether Raleigh and the convention center was a good site for the conference.

The Rev. Won Namkoong, pastor at West End in the Sanford District, said Raleigh is an ideal location. "Raleigh has a great attraction to have a holy conference," Namkoong said. "It is approachable from every district. It is convenient.

It is not only familiar to the pastors serving in the Triangle area but it is a nice getaway for the pastors serving in rural churches. I have been enjoying the nice facilities and restaurants and good food and great Christian fellowship."

He said the capital city is a strategic and symbolic place to hold the conference. "I wish we had had conference in Raleigh a long time ago," Namkoong said. "It is our strategic place, as the capital city of North Carolina, to spread the Gospel. The Gospel started from Galilee, the city of gentiles, so it is a great place to spread the Gospel here in Raleigh at our holy Christian conference."

George Mewborn, lay member at Calvary Memorial in Snow Hill, located in

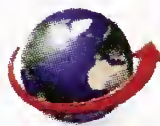
See "Meeting in Raleigh," page 8

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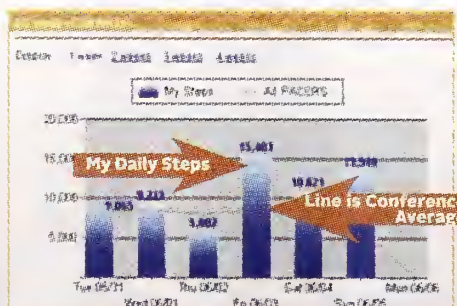


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Lonnie Hedrick	Heather Lear
Karl Grant	Reginald W. Ponder

36 General and Jurisdictional delegates elected

By Bill Norton *

Emily Innes, conference lay leader, was elected chair of the NC Conference General and Southeastern Jurisdictional Delegation; Beth Hood, Greenville district superintendent, was elected vice chair; and Patricia Archer, associate at Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington was elected secretary.

The delegation elected their leadership following the close of the 2011 Annual Conference on Saturday, June 17.

Every four years, elections are held for delegates to the General Conference, where church laws are approved, and the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, where bishops are elected.

Only lay members of the conference vote for lay delegates, and only clergy vote for clergy delegates. Each group elected nine to General Conference, plus an additional nine for Jurisdictional Conference (total of 18), and five lay alternates.

Following tradition, the chair of the delegation rotates between clergy one year and laity the next. This was the year for a lay-



Emily Innes (center) was elected chair of the NC Conference Delegation to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Beth Hood (right) was elected vice chair and Trish Archer (left) was elected secretary. The elections were held by the delegation following the adjournment of Annual Conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)

person to head the delegation.

Diverse representation

On the complete 2012 delegation, seven clergy and eight laypersons are first-time delegates. Of the 36 delegates (18 lay and 18 clergy) there are 15 women (eight laypersons and seven clergy) and minority groups are represented by three laypersons and five clergy. The three laypersons are General Conference delegates and the clergy have one.

The youngest delegate is 17 and the oldest is 82. The lay delegation has a 17-year-old and a 20-year-old

on the General Conference delegation and a 20-year-old on the Jurisdictional delegation.

The youngest clergy General Conference delegate is 36 and the youngest Jurisdictional delegate is 34.

The oldest General Conference delegate is 66, one lay and one clergy. For the Jurisdictional delegation, the oldest layperson is 82 and the oldest clergy is 58.

Electronic voting and ballots

Delegate voting during the 2011 Annual Conference was by electronic keypads. By using the keypads, a ballot could be taken in less than a minute compared to the 45 minutes using paper ballots.

Even with the keypads, clergy needed a Friday evening session to complete elections around 10 p.m. with the 24th ballot.

In 2008, clergy stayed in session until 5 p.m. on Saturday to complete elections with the 26th ballot. In 2004, clergy needed 17 ballots to complete voting and 20 ballots in 2000.

The number 13 seems to be the magical number for laity. Thirteen ballots were needed to elect the 2012 lay delegation and 13 for the 2012, 2008 and 2000 delegation. Six ballots were needed for the 2004 lay delegation. Lay persons elected two persons on the first ballot this year and three on the first ballot in 2008 and 2004. Clergy needed two ballots this year and in 2008 to elect their first delegate.

Clergy elected only one person per ballot to General Conference, with one exception when two persons were elected on the 5th ballot.

Lay delegates for General and Jurisdictional Conferences elected two or three persons on a ballot when there was an election.

General Conference

General Conference meets April 24 - May 4, 2012 in Tampa, Florida.

Delegates to the General Conference spend most of the first week in

one of 13 legislative committees and in plenary session during the second week.

A typical day during the conference will begin at 8:30 a.m. and often concludes around 10:30 p.m.

Each delegate will have a three-inch thick binder of legislative issues to read before the conference.

Conference delegates, in order of election, have selected to be on a specific legislative committee.

The committees and conference member are: Church and Society 1 - Leonard Fairley, Church and Society 2 - Tim Reaves, Conferences - Ann Davis, Discipleship - Bill Gattis and Courtney Jennings, Faith and Order - Beth Hood, Financial Administration - Gray Southern and Mack Parker, General Administration - Trish Archer and Christine Dodson, Global Ministries - Emily Innes, Independent Commissions - Bill Norton, Judicial Administration - LaNella Smith, Local Church - Carl Frazier and Gary Locklear, Ministry and Higher Education - Tim Russell, and Superintendency - Bob Bergland and Duncan McMillan.

The first two lay and clergy jurisdictional delegates, the 10th and 11th elected, will travel with the General Conference delegation to fill vacancies as needed at General Conference, at the discretion of the delegation chair.

Bishops elected, assigned at SEJ Conference

The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference meets at Lake Junaluska, July 17-20, 2012.

The SEJ Conference actually begins on July 18, but July 17 is when the delegations hear presentations by the episcopal nominees and then the nominees visit each delegation to respond to questions.

At least five bishops will be elected by the SEJ delegates in 2012. Following their election, the bishops will be assigned to annual conferences by the SEJ Episcopacy Committee.

Because Bishop Al Gwinn, the NC Conference resident bishop, will retire following the 2012 SEJ Conference, the committee will determine the next bishop of the NC Conference.

The NC Conference has two votes on the committee. Innes and Hood currently serve on the Episcopacy Committee. The delegation selected them to continue serving on the committee four more years after the SEJ meeting in 2012.

* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.

2012 NC Conference Delegation (In order of election)

LAITY

CLERGY

General Conference Delegation

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Emily Innes (chair) | 1. Beth Hood (vice-chair) |
| 2. Christine Dodson | 2. Gray Southern |
| 3. Courtney Jennings | 3. Tim Russell |
| 4. Gary Locklear | 4. Leonard Fairley |
| 5. Bill Norton | 5. Tim Reaves |
| 6. Duncan McMillan | 6. Patricia Archer (secretary) |
| 7. Ann Davis | 7. Carl Frazier |
| 8. Mack Parker | 8. Bill Gattis |
| 9. LaNella Smith | 9. Bob Bergland |

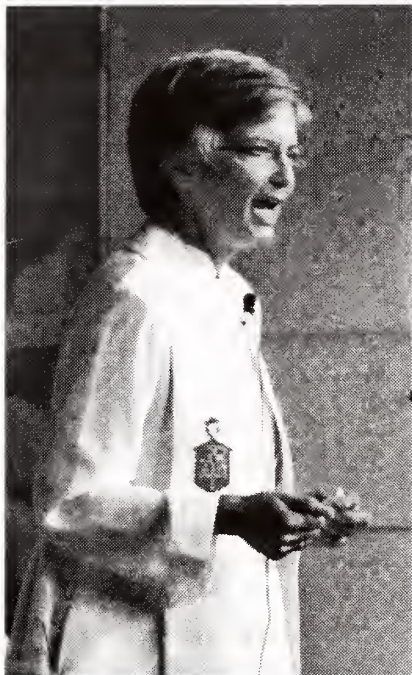
Southeastern Jurisdiction Delegation (Includes Delegates 1-9 above)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Steve Taylor | 10. Ben Williams |
| 11. Laura Little | 11. Edgardo Colon-Emeric |
| 12. Beth Norris | 12. Carol Goehring |
| 13. CJ Pearce | 13. Sam Wynn |
| 14. Tom Walden | 14. Regina Henderson |
| 15. Sam Isley | 15. Kevin Baker |
| 16. Eston C. Brinkley | 16. David Banks |
| 17. Barry Merrill | 17. Won Namkoong |
| 18. Fred Hight | 18. Greg Jenks |

Alternates

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 19. Frank Brooks | 19. Jon Strother |
| 20. Katie Brinkley | 20. Edgar De Jesus |
| 21. Allen O. Morris | 21. Marty Cauley |
| 22. Martha Bullock Caves | 22. Gayle Felton |
| 23. Gretchen Shea | 23. Paul Stallsworth |

"Let the river flow," says Bishop Hope Morgan Ward



By Reggie Ponder *

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward came home to the North Carolina Annual Conference and shared a message of grace, hope and transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ward is the episcopal leader of the Mississippi Annual Conference and served as a pastor, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries, and district superintendent in the North Carolina Conference before being elected bishop at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference in July 2004.

Ward preached during the Wednesday night Worship Service on June 15. She also preached during the Memorial Service on Thursday morning, June 16 (see page 7).

She compared the power of the Holy Spirit to the dynamic flow of a mighty river such as the Mississippi. "Some who live in the vicinity of the

river's path insist on the importance of levees but others believe the untamed power of the river is such that the wiser path is to let the river flow where it will," she said.

For the church, the way to the fullness of life in the power of the Holy Spirit is to "let the river flow," Ward said.

Ward described the sharing of possessions in common by the Spirit-filled community of believers as described in Acts 2 as the "back story to the powerful mission story that we read in the book of Acts."

She talked about the missionary work of Tobias Gibson, who brought Methodism to the Mississippi territory. She explained that Gibson had much the same role in Mississippi as Bishop Francis Asbury had in the Carolinas as a pioneer of Methodism.

When Asbury commissioned Gibson for the work in the new territory he told him his boundaries

would be the Carolinas to the east, the Gulf of Mexico to the south, the Cumberland River to the north and the "setting sun" to the west, she said.

She challenged the church of today to adopt the missionary spirit of ministry with the setting sun as the only boundary.

Ward said the world needs the light and hope of the Gospel message the church has been entrusted with. The Gospel "well-preached and beautifully lived" will bring light and life in places of darkness and death, she said. "Let us light up this world as nothing else can do," Ward said, explaining "there is nothing else that lights up the world like the church can light up the world."

* Reggie Ponder serves as the pastor at Perkins UMC in Shawboro and is a staff writer at *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City.

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward was the featured preacher for two of the worship services during Annual Conference. Ward was the Raleigh District Superintendent when she was elected a bishop in 2004.

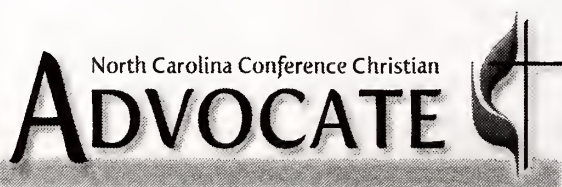
(Photo by Bill Norton)



Conference members form a line to greet Bishop Hope Morgan Ward (white robe) and her husband, Mike, facing camera on right. Bishop Ward was a clergy member of the NC Conference and was serving as Raleigh District superintendent when she was elected a bishop. She preached during the Wednesday evening Opening Worship and Service of Holy Communion and the Thursday Memorial Service. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Bishop Hope Morgan Ward (left) presented a plaque to Bishop Al Gwinn as a recognition of the North Carolina Conference for having 3,774 persons give \$1,727,362 in Advance Specials during 2010. Half of the amount given was for Haiti support. The NC Conference has the highest participation of churches in Advance giving in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. (Photo by Reggie Ponder)



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Annual Conference overview *continued from page 1*

lay and clergy leaders as well as local congregations," Bishop Gwinn said.

Year of Jubilee

To help establish accurate membership and average worship attendance baselines for local churches, the Bishop and Cabinet named 2011 as the "Year of Jubilee."

This set a new baseline for local churches after wiping out statistical inaccuracies and a promise that each would maintain accurate records from this time on.

The statistical records reported to the conference showed that membership is 232,154, down 5,341 from the previous year; worship attendance was 81,926 or 1,526 less; and church school attendance was 36,414, down 886.

Electronic voting

For the first time at the NC Annual Conference, voting by lay and clergy members for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference was accomplished using electronic keypads.

Members elected nine laypersons and nine clergy, a total of 18, as General Conference delegates. To those 18, an additional nine laypersons and nine clergy were elected to form the 36-member Jurisdictional Delegation.

In addition, lay and clergy members each elected five alternates. (See related article on page 3.)

Financial matters

Following the practice in past conferences, all financial matters were presented together with a vote taken later in the conference. The financial impact on local churches remained the same as last year with a slight decrease in the overall budget. The budget approved at the 2011 conference was \$20.3 million, \$578 less than last year.

For the eighth year, local churches will have no increase in their portion



Bishop Al Gwinn offered a dedication prayer during the consecration service of the altar and frontal during the Opening Worship at Annual Conference. Bill Moore, who contributed to the elements in the Goodson Chapel at Duke Divinity School, and Sharon Rich were the artists. Both are from the Burlington District. Funding was provided by an anonymous donor. (Photo by Bill Norton)

of health insurance for pastors. Individual participants in the health plan will receive changes in premiums and benefits for 2012 but there is a "buy-up" option to keep co-payments for prescriptions, doctor visits and deductibles the same as 2011.

The local church portion of clergy health insurance, beginning in January 2012, remains at \$918.02 per month. The clergy benefit changes under the new plan, compared with 2011, include: annual deductible moves from \$500 to \$1000, co-payments for office visits increase by \$10 each to \$40 for primary care physicians and \$50 for specialists and the first three tiers of pharmacy benefit co-pays increased by \$5 each to a new schedule of \$15, \$35, and \$50.

A fourth tier for specialty prescriptions, typically cutting edge or experimental treatments, was included for the new plan. Under this tier, participants would pay 25% of the cost with a minimum of \$50 per prescription and a maximum of \$100.

The clergy participant monthly payment would increase in the single person coverage by \$16.01 from \$133.45 to \$149.46; in the parent/child coverage by \$29.64 from

\$247.01 to \$276.65; and the family coverage would increase by \$40.80 from \$339.96 to \$380.78.

Under a new "buy-up" option participants can select, there is a larger monthly premium and the benefits (deductibles and co-payments) will remain the same as in 2011.

By selecting this option, single participant monthly premium would increase by \$43.04 from \$133.45 to \$173.49, parent/child premium would increase by \$74.10 from \$247.01 to \$321.11, and the family participant would increase their payment by \$101.99 from \$339.98 to \$441.97 per month.

The pension past service year rate and minimum salary remain the same as 2011 and district superintendents requested that their salary be the same as 2011.

Resolutions

Resolutions which were adopted included one supporting negotiation in the Middle East, one supporting effective and constructive peacemaking between Palestinians and Israelis through positive investment in Palestine, and one supporting socio-economic and racial diversity

in public schools.

Two resolutions were defeated. The first would have amended the Discipline paragraph 161J on abortion. The second proposed withdrawing from The United Methodist Church from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

The complete text of all Resolutions was published in the June 2011 issue of the Advocate.

Memorial service

Thirty clergy and spouses of clergy and Bishop Marion M. Edwards were remembered during a Memorial Service. (See page 10.)

Awards and offerings

Three awards were presented by Conference United Methodist Men President Tom Starnes for UMM: to the NCC by National Association of Conference presidents of UMM for 100 percent payment of conference apportionments for 2010; to Tom Walden, named a Fellow of the Society of John Wesley for his devotion to prayer, youth, and mission efforts of the UMM; and the G. Ross Freeman award given for "inspired ministries of UMM in evangelism, mission, and spiritual growth to the Rev. Ross Carter, pastor of Sunrise UMC in the Raleigh District.

Additional awards presented during the conference were Key Taylor—Wesley Memorial UMC, Elizabeth City District; UM Foundation Saints of God—L. Milton Whaley, and the late Charles McAdams; Jack Crum Prophetic Ministry Award—All God's Children UMC; and Harry Denman Evangelism Award—Cassie Hall, Bob Gallagher, and the Rev. Johnny Branch.

Conference members provided financial support for three ministries: Ryan Epps Home—\$8,441.26, Imagine No Malaria—\$9,131.55, and Ministries of the Laity—\$3,917.26

No State of the Church

With the conference schedule running behind Thursday evening, Bishop Gwinn decided not to present his State of the Church Address.

2012 AC in Raleigh

The 2012 NC Annual Conference will be held June 13-16 at the Raleigh Convention Center.

* Bill Norton is Advocate editor; Reggie Ponder, staff writer at Annual Conference, is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer at The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City; and Taylor Mills, editor of the Annual Conference Saddlebag, is senior pastor of Trinity UMC in Durham.



Bishop Gwinn congratulates Cassie Hall for receiving the Denman Evangelism Award. Others receiving the award were the Rev. Johnny Branch, right, and Bob Gallagher, not shown. (Photos by Reggie Ponder)

Tom Starnes, Conference UMM president, presents the award naming Tom Walden a Fellow of the Society of John Wesley.



Bishop Al Gwinn, on stage, offered a prayer for the 10 new faith communities and their leaders while conference members from the 2011 Acts 2 churches surrounded the leaders and placed hands on them during the prayer. (Photo by Bill Norton)

2011 Acts 2 churches demonstrate vitality

The NC Annual Conference celebrated Acts 2 churches across the conference that have demonstrated health and vitality through Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Spiritual Formation, and Risk-Taking Mission and Ministry to the World.

Every church in the conference was given the opportunity to be considered for this special recognition and many participated.

Applications were reviewed by the church's district superintendent and district lay leader. Then the application was reviewed by a sub-committee of the Conference Board of Laity.

This year the Board of Laity was excited and grateful to God to be able to celebrate for the third time the NC Conference Acts 2 churches. These churches were chosen based on the following criteria set forth by the Cabinet. Acts 2 churches are congregations that:

- ♦ Are making a real difference in passion for Christ and depth of service and witness to and with the community.
- ♦ Are growing in deeper faithfulness, in membership, and in professions of faith.
- ♦ Fully support connectional giving.
- ♦ Congregation's whose health and vitality is not found in "business-as-usual" but is reflected in the 4 key descriptors—radical, passionate, intentional, risk-taking—while honoring the local context for ministry.

Acts 2 Churches

By districts, the following churches were recognized at Annual Conference as being 2011 Acts 2 Churches:

- ♦ **Burlington District**—Carrboro, First – Elon, Hillsborough, Union Grove, and University
- ♦ **Durham District**—Aldersgate, City Road, Epworth, Mt. Sylvan, Trinity and Warren's Grove
- ♦ **Elizabeth City**—All God's Children, Buxton, Edenton, Hatteras, Hertford, Little Grove, and Woodland
- ♦ **Fayetteville District**—Haymount, Kipling, and Spring Hill
- ♦ **Goldsboro District**—Benson, Centenary – Smithfield, Elevation, Greater Heights, and Jefferson
- ♦ **Greenville District**—Aurora, Bath, Hobgood, Jarvis Memorial, St. James, and Trinity - Belhaven
- ♦ **New Bern District**—Ann Street, Beech Grove, Rhems, and St. Peter's
- ♦ **Raleigh District**—Apex, First – Fuquay-Varina, Fuquay-Varina, Highland, Holland's, Saint Andrews, and Wake Forest
- ♦ **Rockingham District**—Saint Luke and Trinity
- ♦ **Sanford District**—St. Luke – Sanford and Southern Pines
- ♦ **Wilmington District**—Andrews Chapel, Camp, Grace, Oleander, Pine Valley, Wesley Memorial, and Wrightsboro

10 faith communities announced

Ten New Faith Communities, five as traditional starts and five as strategic partnerships with established churches that are going multi-site, were recognized during the 2011 Annual Conference. The pastors and the of the new communities are:

Pastor	Church Name/Focus	Location
Billy Spencer	Healing Waters	Hubert/Jacksonville
Cleve May	The City Well	central Durham
Owen Barrow	Apex north campus	Highway 55N area
Jose Luis Villaseñor	Fiesta Cristiana	Campus of Apex UMC
Jay Helms	Missional communities	Morrisville
Peter Singletary	Multicultural	Jacksonville
Donna Thompson	Solid Rock campus	Spring Lake (Ft. Bragg)
Mike Bass	Solid Rock campus	Community
Michael Stadler	Solid Rock campus	Mt. Ariel/Woodside
Matt Youngblood	Spout Springs area	north Spring Lake

12 churches recognized for Outstanding Lay Ministries

Twelve local churches, one from each district, were recognized at the NC Annual Conference as having Outstanding Lay Ministries. The selections were made by the District Lay Leaders. "Many of these ministries are taking place in small rural communities, some in more urban areas, but all of these ministries are connecting to their unique communities, using the resources they have," said Conference Lay Leader Emily Innes before presenting the selected ministries. "Through these ministries United Methodists are sharing the love of Jesus Christ, by feeding the poor, visiting those who are sick or in prison, and teaching children and youth, all with the focus of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," Innes said.

District	Program	Church
Burlington	Quiet Care	University
Durham	Tutoring Program	Glendale Heights
Elizabeth City	South Mills Christian Men's Fellowship	McBride
Fayetteville	Betty Butler Home Reconstruction	Woodside
Goldsboro	Wednesday Night Live	St. Luke
Greenville	Shepherd's Helper Ministry	Jarvis Memorial
New Bern	LOGOS After School Children's Program	Ann Street
Raleigh	Community Victory Garden	Highland
Rockingham	Carpenters for Christ	Saint Luke
Rocky Mount	Bethlehem Food Pantry	First Roanoke Rapids
Sanford	Youth Bible Study	Roseland
Wilmington	Sharon UMM Ministry	Sharon

Memorial service celebrated the miraculous character of lives lived in the light of God's grace

By Reggie Ponder *

During the Memorial Service held Thursday morning of Annual Conference, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward recalled that one of those being remembered had once told her "my whole life has been a miracle."

Throughout the memorial service message she focused on the miraculous character of lives lived in the light of God's grace.

She told of a pastor and his wife in Mississippi who had been leaders of a church that saw its sanctuary destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The couple led the church and community in rebuilding and were a beacon of hope in the community, she said.

The pastor recently called her and reported that his wife had died, she said, adding that he had mentioned that his wife had died on a Sunday and also had been born on a Sunday. The man said "I guess she was just a Sunday person," Ward said, adding that the phrase aptly describes all faithful Christians: "We are Sunday people."

God makes life a miracle both in this life and in the next, creating a

people of abundant life and eternal life, she said.

The mystery of intertwining lives "is indeed a miracle," Ward said.

She said that after Hurricane Katrina she heard over and over that there were an amazing number of butterflies on the Gulf Coast. At a service of Eucharist on a makeshift altar the first Sunday after Katrina, she noticed a butterfly hovering near the bread and wine.

"The Holy Spirit hovers over every broken heart," Ward said. A life beautifully lived is "truly a miracle."

The memorial service remembered the 31 clergy and spouses of clergy who died since the last Annual Conference. "Every one of these lives has been a miracle," she said.

Ward noted 1 Corinthians 15:58 calls Christians to be steadfast and immovable in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, their work is not in vain.

* Reggie Ponder serves as the pastor at Perkins UMC in Shawboro and is a staff writer at *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City.

In loving memory

Clergy

John Sanders Pearsall, Sr.
Camille Ogle Yorkey
Percy Ray Phillips
John Clifton Lupton, Jr. |
Todd Stephen Krueger
Samuel Duncan McMillan III
Jack Monroe Benfield
Allen Cleveland Edens, Jr.
Angus McKay Cameron
Sam Jones Womack, Jr.
Russell W. Conner
Edgar Earl Whitley
Henry Arthur Bizzell, Jr.
Harold Franklin Leatherman
George Franklin Blanchard
Argel Harold Payne
Lonnie Dale Hedrick, Sr.
Bishop Marion Edwards

Spouses of Clergy

Lucille Jones Chaffin
Louise Brown Lancaster
Moeine Weaver Wiggins
Jodie Casner Marshburn
Raymond Allen Vitkus
Elizabeth Ann Strauss Reed
Lina W. Eubanks
Ruth Cullipher Boone
Pauline Winslow Bundy Methvin
Wilma Frances Wright Leatherman
Bernice Salter Lupton
Dorothy Anne Latham Sparrow
Iva Harris Wright



Mrs. Marion M. Edwards, widow of the late Bishop Marion Edwards, stands beside her son, Wesley, as Bishop Edwards was remembered during the Memorial Service.



David Beck and David Hutchins lit candles in memory of deceased pastors or clergy spouses during the Memorial Service. (Photos by Bill Norton)

Meeting in Raleigh receives mixed reviews

continued from page 2

the Greenville District, strongly preferred holding the conference at the civic center in Greenville. Conference was held in Greenville 2006-2010 after being in Fayetteville for more than three decades.

Mewborn noted he had been one of those who lobbied for holding the conference in Greenville. "So I'm partial," Mewborn said.

"The Greenville facility is just so much more user friendly and so much more accessible," he said. The Raleigh site "is certainly not as easy to maneuver."

Mewborn said Greenville is more centrally located within the Conference than Raleigh is. In addition, churches in Greenville provided easy access for off-site meetings for groups, he said.

He said none of his comments should be understood as reflecting negatively on the Raleigh Convention Center staff. The staff at the Raleigh facility was very kind and helpful, he said.

Shirley Foushee, a lay member from Allensville in the Durham District, said the conference had gone smoothly for her. "I haven't had any problems so far," she said. Foushee said she stayed at the Sheraton, which is near the convention center.

"The places for your meals are fairly convenient," Foushee said. "I parked my car in the parking lot across from the Sheraton and I haven't moved it since."

She pointed out that even with two artificial hips she had been able to walk anywhere she needed to go. "The escalators are wonderful," Foushee said.

She praised the staff at the hotel and convention center. "Everybody has been very helpful," she said. "I have found everybody to be real cordial."

Foushee said that while this year's conference was close enough to her home in Person County that she could have commuted, she decided not to because of the possibility of late sessions.

"There are a lot of things to see here in Raleigh," Foushee said. She got a brochure on activities in Raleigh to take to her grandchildren.

She said that she was able to stay with a nephew when the conference was held in Greenville — an option not available to her in Raleigh. "It has cost me to stay here," she said.

Foushee also attended conference a number of times in Fayetteville. "The seats were very comfortable at the Crown Coliseum, but I like having the tables," she said. The convention center had seats at tables available

for everyone at the conference.

She said a highlight of the conference for her was worship and music particularly the music presented by the young people.

The Rev. Gypsie Murdaugh, pastor at Jerusalem in the Rockingham District, said both Raleigh and Greenville have their advantages.

"I think that the location of Raleigh is a lot more convenient," Murdaugh said. "However, I personally liked the facility in Greenville better." Restaurants and shopping centers were closer in Greenville, she said.

The Rev. Marty Cauley, pastor at St. Paul in Rocky Mount, was OK with the conference's location. "I don't mind being in Raleigh," he said.

The convention center area had its advantages, he said. "I like the fact that we can walk to restaurants," Cauley said. "I like the options."

Parking is "tolerable," he said, referencing a concern expressed by a number of those attending the conference.

"My biggest complaint is it's hard to create the right environment in this room," Cauley said. "I would like to make the room more user-friendly."

Although he likes having the tables, he said it would be nice to have more of a "warm" atmosphere in the meeting hall.

Cauley acknowledged that his observation about the environment in the room might actually have less to do with the facility and more to do with this being a year for electing delegates to General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference.

The Rev. Jesse Brunson, pastor at Galilee in the Rockingham District, said the convention center is a very good facility and the surrounding area offers a good choice of restaurants. "The only thing that I think has been an issue is the parking," Brunson said. The parking is expensive, he said.

Bertha Belo, a lay member at Mt. Olive in Lumberton, said she enjoyed the conference but questioned whether Raleigh was the best place to hold it. "I like it OK, but to me it's a little bit too expensive when you don't know the area," Belo said.

She said she would like to return to Greenville or Fayetteville in the future. She also said she wouldn't mind the conference being held in Wilmington.

* Reggie Ponder serves as the pastor at Perkins UMC in Shawboro and is a staff writer at *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City.



Registration at Annual Conference was held in the Mezzanine Level of the Raleigh Convention Center. To register, clergy or laypersons would go to the area designated with the first letter of their last name. (Photos this page by Bill Norton)



Two groups of round tables, located in the back of both sides of the convention hall, were available for guests and conference members as needed. Electrical connections were available in those locations.



Tellers and other conference members respond to images on one of the four video screens at Annual Conference. The screens are used to assist members in seeing what is taking place on the stage or to show election results, videos and other media presentations. A fifth screen is turned to face the stage so individuals on the stage can see the same images conference members see.

A time for worship, music, drama, dance



Thursday evening was scheduled for the Bishop's State of the Church Address but conference matters were not completed in the allocated time so Bishop Gwinn did not deliver the address. Action on business matters were taken by conference members between scheduled choirs for the evening. The Garris Chapel UMC Choir from LaGrange provided an uplifting break during the business session. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Lacy Blue from Jerusalem UMC in Laurinburg offered a mime presentation during the Wednesday evening worship service. (Photo by Reggie Ponder)



IGNITE (In God, Nothing is Too Extreme), the 60-member youth music arts ministry at Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington preformed Friday evening. GLOW (God Lights Our World) a youth hand mime ministry at Pine Valley, not shown, used black lights and white gloves to create images and words set to Christian music. (Photo by Bill Norton)



The Boys of Summer men's a cappella ensemble from McMannen UMC in Durham, inspired conference members Thursday evening during their close harmony. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Youth from the 2010 Pilgrimage House Band opened and closed the Thursday evening business session with music. Members of the House Band audition in the fall of each year to be part of the group. (Photo by Reggie Ponder)



Edenton Street UMC Liturgical Dancers participated in the Service of Commissioning and Ordination. They danced to "I have decided to follow Jesus." (Photo by Reggie Ponder)



The Revelation Ringers (North Raleigh UMC, Raleigh) and the HUMRingers (Highland UMC, Raleigh) set the worship tone for the Opening Worship and Service of Holy Communion on Wednesday evening. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Timothy D. Catlett receives his elder's stole from Bishop Al Gwinn during ordination services at Annual Conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Ordained elders in full connection (front row, L-R) Laura Fine Ledford, Courtney Michel Randall, David Lewis King, Dalma Garrell Cribb, Bishop Al Gwinn, Jaylynn Warren Byassee (white robe, ordained as a courtesy to Western North Carolina Conference), Harriet Tuck Taylor and Vermel Harrison Taylor. Second row: Nathan Andrew Wittman, Gerald Stephen Castle, Elizabeth Ann Gaines, and Christi DeSha Dye and third row: Timothy Davis Catlett, Joseph David Beam IV, Donald Thomas Miller, Carolyn Beers Roy (partially behind Dye), John Michael McAllister, Nancy McGee Willard (white robe). (Photo by Bill Norton)



Commissioned as provisional members – Elders Track (unless noted otherwise) are: (front row, L-R) Anna Elizabeth Adams, Rochele Elaine Bailey, Leah Farriba Skaggs, Lorie Ann Cox, Bishop Al Gwinn, Michele Karen Clark, and Elizabeth Waggenger Polk. Back row: Tara Culp Lain (white robe), Jaye Nesbitt White (Deacon Track), Shay Joseph Hall, Walter Ray Teague II (received as Associate Member), Toni Lee Wood, Vito Bisogno (between Gwinn and Clark), John David Amon, and James Scott Finicum. Not in the photograph was Scott Morgan Foster. (Photo by Bill Norton)



The Durham District Choir sang during the ordination service. (Photo above and photo in upper right by Reggie Ponder)

Over 30 ordained and commissioned on June 18

By Reggie Ponder *

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. ordained and commissioned more than 30 persons at the Raleigh Convention Center June 18 as the North Carolina annual conference for 2011 drew to a close.



Dr. Timothy Tennent

Asbury Theological Seminary President Timothy Tennent preached a sermon at the ordination and commissioning service entitled "Rebuilding the Pulpit." The message used biblical figures such as Nehemiah and Jeremiah to illustrate the urgency of proclaiming God's salvation to a people who have forgotten it or are beginning to forget it.

Tennent said people prefer to live amid the "exclamation marks" but "sometimes we're called to live in the questions marks of life." The prophet Jeremiah was called to be faithful as Jerusalem was

burning to the ground, he said. Jeremiah's characteristic proclamation was lament. "Lament is good because lament is the mother of hope," Tennent said.

Today's lament addresses a church on the verge of a renewed sense of apostolic Christianity and moving beyond a form of Christianity that "sands away the prophetic edge of the biblical faith," he said.

Nehemiah, speaking to a generation in which the people of God had forgotten their own scripture and it had been "replaced seductively by personal narratives," called on the people to remember the mighty acts of God, Tennent said. Nehemiah not only rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem "but also rebuilt the pulpit," he said.

Tennent urged the ordinands not to give in to concerns about salary, or congregation size, or parsonage size, but instead to regard those questions as "arrows from the pit of hell." He challenged the ordinands to be "not sanctuary lights but street lights."

Following the ordinations and commissionings, several people came forward when Bishop Gwinn invited people to respond if they sensed a call to ordained ministry. Those who came forward were prayed for by a district superintendent.

* Reggie Ponder serves as the pastor at Perkins UMC in Shawboro and is a staff writer at *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City.



Tara Culp Lain was one of thirteen commissioned as provisional members - elder track during the 2011 Annual Conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Apportionments - Moses Kumar (left), general secretary of the General Council on Finance and Administration, presented a plaque to the conference for being one of 14 conferences to pay 100% of the 2010 General Church apportionments. This is the sixth year in a row that the conference has been so recognized. Receiving the plaque are (L-R) the Rev. Danny Allen, chair of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration; Christine Dodson, conference treasurer; and Bishop Al Gwinn.



Passing of the Mantle - During annual conferences, a retiring pastor places a stole on a recently ordained pastor as a sign of passing of the mantle from one group to another. The Rev. John Farmer (right) who retired at the 2011 Annual Conference is showing placing a stole on the Rev. Elizabeth Ann Gaines, ordained an Elder at the conference. (Photos by Reggie Ponder)



Honoring Retirees - Clergy retiring at the 2011 Annual Conference, and their spouses, are: (front row, L-R) Jane Barber, Brenda Ferguson, Elizabeth Campbell, Curtis Mull, John Farmer, Charles Herrin, Kitty Herrin, Pat Hall, Robert Carpenter, Charles Plowman, Michael Register, Sr., and Bill Weisser. Back row (L-R) are: Eddie Barber, Horace Ferguson, Thomas Campbell, Sandra Mull, Penny Farmer, Rick Ward, Shirley Ward, Jean Hines, Jim Hines, Wanda Seate, Billy Seate, William Kenneth Hall, Sr., Judy Carpenter, Sally Plowman, Myrtle Register, and Anne Weisser. (Photo by Bill Norton)



2011 Licensed Local Pastors - (L-R, front row) Wayne Wood, Sadot Mendez, Lori Cox, Jodi Lampley, Leslie Mills, Bishop Gwinn, Christie Burley, Laura Johnson, Meredith Snider, Ray Beale, Rufus Autry, Syler Raymovil (attended school as a courtesy to the Florida Conference,) and Hyun Soak Park. Second Row: Francisco Garcia-Velasquez, Darrell Copeland, Pat Patton, Debbie Matthis, Josh Horne, Alexandra Willis, Vickie Woolard, Tawny Bernhardt, and Rick Russell. Third Row: Joseph Peterson, Rosario Bottari, Carol Grantham, Billy Spencer, Kelly Barr, Jesse Baker, Drew Willis, Jane Almon, Pam Stoffel, Regine Jean-Baptiste, Gina Miller, and Cari Willis. Fourth Row: Gary Lucas, Ernie Block, William Negron, Jr., Richard D. Booker, David Bratton, Kyle Burrows, Scott Shaffer, David Allen, David Morrow, Josh Kurtz, Jabe Lagen, Johnny Yount, Bob Mosher, Michael Williams, Rob Tucker, Brock Meyer, Mike Whatley, Ron Elkins, and Elizabeth Tyson. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Laurie Beth Jones offers insights into ways to work together

By Reggie Ponder *

Texas-based author, motivational speaker and management consultant Laurie Beth Jones offered the 2011 Annual Conference insights into ways differing personalities can work together effectively in fulfilling the church's mission, during two presentations on Friday, June 17.

Author of such popular titles as "Jesus CEO," Jones used her notion of the four primal elements — fire, earth, wind and water — as four basic dimensions of personality to encourage churches to navigate conflict successfully for the sake of the church's mission.



Laurie Beth Jones conducted two teaching sessions during the Celebration of the Laity. She talked about personalities and how different personalities can work together.

She illustrated her understanding of the elements as aspects of personality using examples from the Bible. Jones regularly uses the theory of elements and personality, which is codified in the Path Elements Profile or PEP, to work with businesses and other organizations to improve communication and effectiveness. Jones told the audience at conference that she was motivated to write "Jesus CEO" by seeing all the man-

agement books that celebrate cutthroat behavior and violent imagery. She described "Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun" as "the one that sent me over the edge." Her study of Jesus showed her that he had three basic traits: He knew himself; He took appropriate action; and He was a master of relationship skills — he "knew the human heart." She recognized those as three traits needed by all leaders. "That's how Jesus CEO was born," she said.

During the conference, Jones offered the PEP at a deep discount and encouraged people to take the profile and learn more about themselves. She also described some personality characteristics associated with the four elements:

- Fire — Bold, assertive, risk-taking, passionate.
- Earth — Solid, predictable, dependable, measured.
- Wind — Lively, spontaneous, energetic, free.
- Water — Calm, steady, reflective, supportive, flexible.

Jones said a person with any combination of these elemental traits can be a leader. The key, she said, is to understand yourself, understand others and understand how to interact with others effectively. Although differing personalities tend to avoid each other. Jones said, in fact "we need each other." Participants were encouraged to learn more about PEP and use the principles to improve communication and missional effectiveness in their churches.

* Reggie Ponder serves as the pastor at Perkins UMC in Shawboro and is a staff writer at The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.



LEFT: Serving as one of the liturgists for the Service of Commissioning and Ordination, the Rev. Mattheue Locklear brought to life a tongue-twisting passage from the book of Nehemiah. (Photo by Reggie Ponder)

BELOW: The Rev. Johnny Branch, pastor of St. James UMC in Greenville, responds to a lighter moment during the conference while lay members concentrate on their voting. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Ann White, Christ Community in Clayton and a fifth grade teacher, spoke for a resolution supporting economic and racial diversity in public schools. She said diversity is a blessing and pointed out that with segregation children cannot learn about the blessing of other cultures. This resolution was adopted.



The five proposed resolutions inspired heartfelt debate from members of the Annual Conference on Friday. As the morning progressed, Bishop Al Gwinn remarked on the strength of the "holy conferencing" taking place. The Rev. Susan Harrison, First - Williamston in the Greenville District, spoke in favor of a resolution to remove from ¶161J in the Discipline the sentence "We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures." Several speakers who addressed both sides of the issue. The resolution was defeated.

Photos this section by Reggie Ponder



Susan Harsh-Cafferty, Durham District, expressed concern about the procedure used in voting on the Incapacity Report. The conference decided to reconsider the vote, removed two sections from the proposal and adopted the amended report.



Dr. Carl Frazier, chair of the Task Force on Superintendency, presented the Task Force report calling for discontinuing the current 12 districts and creating eight new districts within the conference. The presentation was adopted. The Bishop and Cabinet will make the decision on district lines with the new districts taking effect at the end of the 2012 Annual Conference.



During discussion of a resolution calling for the UMC to withdraw from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Emily Farnell, young adult from Centenary in the Goldsboro District, spoke against the resolution saying the denomination would lose its voice of moderation on the group. The resolution was not adopted.

Retirement benefits services continue through Treasurer's office after Braswell's second retirement

At Annual Conference, the Conference Board of Pension honored the Rev. Dr. Kermit Braswell and thanked him for his service to the conference over the last several years.

Braswell retired in 2002, after over 40 years of active service in the NC Annual Conference, and began working on a contract basis as a retirement benefits educator for conference clergy

considering retirement.

Since that time, Braswell has met in private meetings with over 115 clergy men and women contemplating retirement, with many more in dedicated meetings as part of retirement planning seminars and has led presentations in retirement planning workshops.

In the Board of Pension annual conference

report, Cashar Evans, chairperson of the Conference Board of Pension, said "we appreciate the many years of dedication Kermit has shown to the annual conference and clergy members of the conference."

In order to continue to provide retirement education opportunities for clergy, Braswell has been working with another member of the Conference

Treasurer's Office staff, JoAnna Ezuka. She will continue to provide service to clergy and their spouses who are contemplating retirement or who are retiring and need assistance sorting through the many forms needed to initiate their benefits.

Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, said "we appreciate Kermit's hard work over the last several years and thank him for ensuring we can continue to provide the same service to our clergy by working with JoAnna during this transition. We are confident that JoAnna will serve our clergy with the same commitment and excellence that Kermit did. Kermit will always be a highly valued member of our team."



Kermit Braswell (standing left) is congratulated following his "second" retirement; first for 40 years of pastoral service, and second for his work as the conference retirement benefits educator. JoAnna Ezuka in the Treasurer's Office has been working with Braswell. She will continue the services for clergy and their spouses considering retirement. Also standing in the photo (L-R) are: Dan O'Neil of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits; Ezuka (partially blocked from view); Para Drake, chair of the Equitable Compensation Committee; and Danny Allen, chair of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

Volunteers pack 90,000 Stop Hunger Now meals

By Reggie Ponder *

Volunteers packed 90,000 meals for hungry people in Haiti and elsewhere in the world during a two-hour period during Annual Conference.

The volunteers gave up their dinner break on Thursday, June 16 to pack meals for the hungry. The projected lasted from 5-7 p.m.

The event was coordinated by Stop Hunger Now, a Raleigh-based organization that works to end hunger by making nutritious meals available to people around the world.

The meals consist of a dehydrated soy and rice product that is fortified with vitamins and minerals.

The Rev. Steve Hickie, pastor at Fairmont UMC in Raleigh and a longtime Stop Hunger Now volunteer, explained that more and more Stop Hunger Now packing projects are being held at annual conferences.

Volunteers packed meals during Annual Conference in 2010 at the Greenville Civic and Convention Center. The tradition was continued as the conference moved this year to the site in Raleigh.

The goal for this year's project at conference was 20,000 meals, so the event was considered an enormous success at 90,000.

Overall, Stop Hunger Now volunteers provided more than 16 million meals in 2010 and are poised to pack more than 22 million this year.

"So it's really a big deal," Hickie said. He explained that about half of all the meals packed in recent months have been going to Haiti. There is a great need in Haiti and a ready network for distributing the food there, he said.

A group of 40 or more volunteers can package 10,000 meals in two hours, according to Stop Hunger Now.

Groups interested in scheduling a meal-packing event may contact the Raleigh office at (919) 954-6480 or email raleigh@stophungernow.org, or contact the Goldsboro office at (919) 809-7711 or goldsboro@stophungernow.org. More information about Stop Hunger Now is available at www.stophungernow.org.

A goal should be set for the number of meals to be packaged and recruit volunteers based on that goal. Groups are asked to raise 25 cents for each meal packaged to assist in covering the shipping cost.

* Reggie Ponder serves as the pastor at Perkins UMC in Shawboro and is a staff writer at *The Daily Advance* in Elizabeth City.



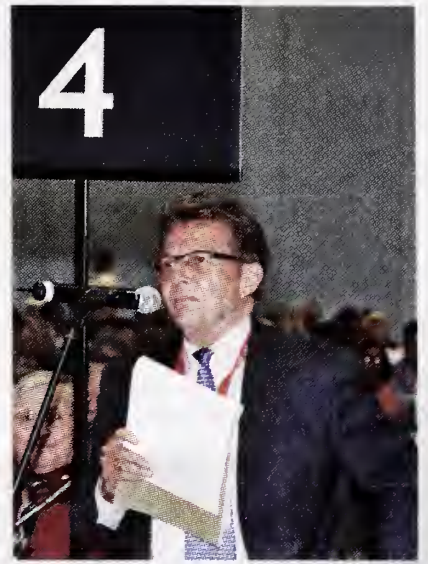
Conference members packaged 90,000 meals to be used in any of 76 countries served by Stop Hunger Now.



Volunteers carefully measured and packaged the meals consisting of a dehydrated soy and rice product that is fortified with vitamins and minerals.



Offerings were taken during three evening services of worship and celebration. Members supported the Ryan Epps Home with \$8,441.26, Imagine No Malaria with \$9,131.55, and Ministries of the Laity with \$3,917.26.



ABOVE: Before a vote was taken on the Conference Council on Finance and Administration report calling for a salary increase for district superintendents, the Rev. Bill Gattis, dean of the Cabinet and speaking for the superintendents, asked that the salary remain at the 2011 figure, \$101,994. The salary proposed in the CF&A budget, \$103,171, was based on a formula adopted by a previous Annual Conference. Conference members voted to keep DS salaries at the 2011 amount. The total budget of \$20,345,047 approved by Annual Conference members is \$578 less than the budget adopted last year. The funds will be raised in 2012 and spent in 2013.

Photos this page by Bill Norton



Bishop Al Gwinn thanks Brigadier General William Gothard for the army hat he is wearing and for Gothard's presentation on changes coming due to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) plan at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville. On the bill of the cap was printed "U.S. Army" and the logo of the 100th anniversary logo of the Army Reserve (1908-2008). On the back of the cap was "GOARMYRESERVE.COM" and "100 Years Strong." In the Fayetteville area, approximately 40,000 military and civilian personnel are being relocated as the Army's Reserve Command and U.S. Army Forces Command move from Fort McPherson, GA. Gothard reported that construction of new facilities is on schedule and on budget. A total of 11 counties are expected to be impacted by the changes. In the NC Conference, the Fayetteville and Sanford Districts have formed a "BRAC Connection" effort led by Jaye White.



Behind half walls on the left of the stage in the Communications Area was where the audio/video control area for the conference was located. From this location, decisions are made about which of the four camera images would be featured on the screen and what video or PowerPoint would be seen. A few of the individuals needed in the process are shown (L-R): Mary Francis McClure, pastor of Trinity in Red Springs; Dennis Peay, pastor of Cokesbury in the Durham District; Scott Migliorisi with MCR in Cary; and Dan Nosbush, A/V manager at MCR.

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Pastoral appointments announced for 2011-12

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr, resident bishop of the Raleigh area, announced the appointments of approximately 900 clergy members of the North Carolina Conference.

The Rev. Caswell Shaw was appointed district superintendent of the Rocky Mount District. The previous superintendent, the Rev. Mack McMillan died in October. The Rev. Tim Russell had been serving the district since McMillan's death. Dr. Reginald Ponder was appointed district superintendent of the Sanford district. The Rev. Stephen C. Compton, the previous superintendent, moved to incapacity leave.

Following are local church pastoral changes as announced by Bishop Gwinn:

BURLINGTON DISTRICT

Alamance, Caswell, and Orange counties

The Rev. William H. Gattis, district superintendent

Bethel-Center, Hyun Soak Park, full-time local pastor; Bethel-Camp Springs, Stewart A. Crank, Sr., from Allensville-Trinity; Chapel Hill: Christ associate, Lori Ann Cox, probationary elder; Davis Street, Margaret Ellen McCubbin from Wendell; Evergreen, Hannah P. McManus from Chapel Hill: Christ associate; First: Graham, G. Kevin Baker from Reconciliation; Front Street associate, Nathan D. Arledge from assistant pastor, DU: Aldersgate; Bethel-Hebron-Union, Robert B. Way from Piney Grove; Lebanon co-pastor, Drew Alan Willis, student pastor; Lebanon co-pastor, Alexandra Fisher Willis, student pastor; Orange associate, Heather Jean Olson from Unidos por Cristo; Rock Creek, Richard Dale Booker, part-time local pastor; Shiloh, Hyung S. Kim from FA: Union; and Union Grove associate, Laura R. Johnson, part-time local pastor.

DURHAM DISTRICT

Durham, Granville, Person, and Vance counties

The Rev. H. Gray Southern, district superintendent

Aldersgate assistant, Robert Joseph Tucker, student pastor; Allensville-Trinity, Ronald J. Snider from Fletcher's Chapel; Brookland-Brooksedale, Seong IL-Eom from GO: Salem; Calvary, Carolyn Jane Willis, part-time local pastor; Fletcher's Chapel, Heather Heinzman Lear from Highland associate; Bethel-Gray Rock, Jason M. Thornton from Stem-Bullocks; Helena, Julie Ann Poston from Bethlehem-Shady Grove; Lea's Chapel, Bryan Wilson, student pastor; Longhurst, Francisco Garcia-Velasquez, student pastor; Marrow's Chapel, K. Darrel Bowles, student pastor; Massey's Chapel, Laurie Hays Coffman from Calvary; Mt. Zion, Donald Daniel from Ellerbe-Mt. Pleasant; The City Well (new church), Harold Cleve May III from Southern Pines associate; New Creation, David Lee Morrow from another denomination; Oxford, David P. Haley from Winstead; Salem (Person County), Renee Burnette from Burlington Circuit; St. Paul minister of Outreach, Steven Michael Murphy, student pastor; and Stem-Bullocks, John Brock Meyer, part-time local pastor.

ELIZABETH CITY DISTRICT

Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington counties
The Rev. Richard L Stone III, district superintendent

Hebron-Mackeys-Pleasant Grove, Gene Waters, interim supply; Bethany (Chowan), Vickie Woolard, interim supply; First: Elizabeth City, Joseph W. Casteel from Hampstead; Kitty Hawk, Alan P. Swartz from Horne Memorial; Mighty Wind, Anne Elizabeth Tyson, part-time local pastor; Mt. Hermon (Elizabeth City), Gina Rhodes Miller, interim supply; Murfreesboro, Monica Yungeberg, full-time local pastor; and Shiloh (Stumpy Point), Pamela Sue Stoffel, part-time local pastor. -

FAYETTEVILLE DISTRICT

Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, and Sampson counties

The Rev. Samuel Wynn, district superintendent

Bethany-McGee, E. Larry Myrick from McGee; Coats, Richard Phillip Wilkerson from minister education/youth, First: Cary; Gardners Grace campus,



Daily editions of Saddlebags, a summary of actions taken the previous day and a review of the current day, were available on a table as members exited the escalator onto the conference floor. The Rev. Leonard Fairley, Rockingham District superintendent, and the Rev. Dora Dorsey, pastor of Philadelphia UMC in Rockingham, look over one of the editions. (Photo by Bill Norton)

CLASSIFIEDS

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MUSIC DIRECTOR wanted part-time. An individual with drive and enthusiasm to lead, inspire, and continue to develop a well-established and supportive volunteer SATB choir. Must have excellent communication and personal relationship skills in order to collaborate effectively with a wide range of musical groups and individuals. Resume should include academic and professional training, previous positions held, and references. Send resume to SPRC Chairman, 1407 S. Tarboro St., Wilson, NC 27893.

SWANSBORO UNITED METHODIST Church is seeking a full-time Director of Education and Youth Ministries to lead and support our vibrant educational program. SUMC is a regional congregation of 1000 members located on the beautiful Crystal Coast of North Carolina. We seek an energetic, outgoing person of faith to work with people of all ages, especially young people and their leaders. Requirements: undergraduate degree, preferable in Christian Education, Youth Ministry or equivalent; volunteer or paid experience with children and/or youth in a church setting; and an understanding of the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church. For more information or to submit a resume to: bcarey5@ec.rr.com.B. Carey (910) 548-4818.

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OCEAN FRONT CONDO for rent at Villa Dunescape, Atlantic Beach, NC. Top floor with skylight, elevator access, 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 4TVs, WiFi connection, screened porch overlooks pool and ocean. Off-season rates available. Contact Sally Dillon by e-mail jesbdillon@yahoo.com or by phone (919) 931-3295 (Raleigh, NC).

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska, 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

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Hunter leads Academy workshop on servant leadership

"Anyone who wants to be a leader must first be the servant. If you choose to lead, you must serve." National leadership consultant, James C. Hunter, quoted these words from Jesus to summarize his presentation on "Living as a Servant Leader: The True Essence of Leadership." Speaking at the Academy for Leadership Excellence 2011 National Leader Series in May, Hunter said living as a servant leader means that a leader leads by influence and character rather than by coercion or power. Servant leadership is a values and relational-based approach to leadership. It sets aside its own wants and needs in seeking the greater good of others. Hunter's definition of a servant leader is "the skill of influencing people enthusiastically to work together towards goals for the common good, with character that inspires confidence. Having power over people is one thing. Having authority with people is quite another." As with Jesus, servant leadership is rooted in moral authority. "Leadership is about doing the right thing. Character is about doing the right thing. Loving others is about doing the right thing. Again, leadership and character development are one." He said, "Remember, the ultimate test of leadership is whether people are better off when the leader leaves than when he or she got there."



NCC new pastor orientation held

Approximately 60 new pastors to the North Carolina Conference attended an orientation session arranged by the Office of Ministerial Relations on June 30. In addition to these pastors receiving their first episcopal appointment, all clergy being appointed to new places of ministry moved to their new assignment on June 28. Included in areas addressed during the 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. meeting were Connectional Ministries, Communication, Course of Study, Healthy Congregations, Sustaining Effective Clergy Leadership, Sexual Ethics, Pastor's Accountability, Apportionments, Online Data Collection and email accounts, Pensions, Insurance, and Clergy Taxes. Tim Russell, director of Ministerial Relations, is shown talking about Sustaining Effective Clergy Leadership. At the table to his left are the following clergy and their appointments (L-R): Jodi Lampley, Epworth-Greenville District; Elizabeth Tyson, Mighty Wind-Elizabeth City District (both blocked from view); Steve Wellman, New Hope-Goldsboro District; Debbie Matthis, Bethlehem-Shady Grove-Rocky Mount District; and Leslie Mills, Campbell's Creek-Greenville District. (Photo by Bill Norton)

PREPARING FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE 2012

Call for GC Choirs and Ensembles

United Methodist choirs and ensembles are invited to apply to share in worship at General Conference in Tampa, FL on April 24-May 4, 2012. Submit a letter of application by email to gc2012worship@gmail.com, including a brief bio and a link to a YouTube video of the group. The deadline is July 31, 2011.

Volunteer Marshals and Pages Needed for General Conference

Volunteers can now apply online to serve as marshals or pages during The United Methodist Church's 2012 General Conference. The denomination's top legislative assembly will meet in Tampa, Fla. April 24-May 4, 2012. Approximately 150 volunteers are needed during General Conference. Marshals and pages are responsible for their own travel and expenses. Marshals serve in the visitor and reserved seating galleries, assist visitors and special guests and check credentials for proper authorization. Pages assist delegates, secretarial staff, Bishops, members of the Judicial Council and official visitors. They distribute approved materials and deliver printed information. Those interested should submit an online application at www.umcevents.org/gc2012marshal-page. Deadline for applications is Aug. 31, 2011. Applicants will be notified of their status by Nov. 30.

Youth, young people's ministry examples sought for presentation

Examples of the many voices and diverse ministries of United Methodist young people are being requested by the Young People's Ministries division of the General Board of Discipleship to be featured in a presentation at the 2012 General Conference. One-minute videos or pictures with narration about youth/young people's ministries are due by Oct. 31, 2011, to be considered for inclusion in the address. Submission guidelines for both are posted online at <http://globalyoungpeople.org/ypmaddress>.

General Conference petitions accepted through Sept. 27

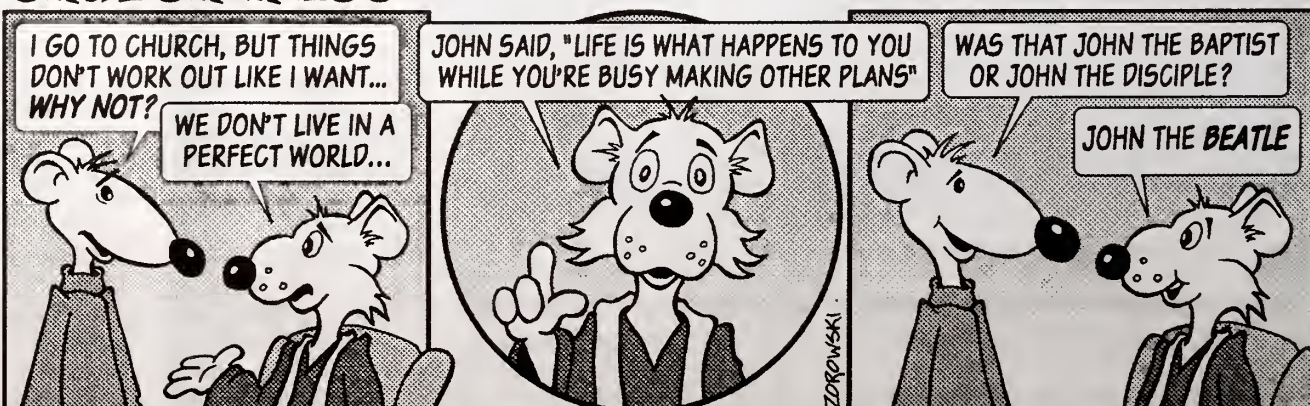
Petitions for consideration by the 2012 General Conference may be submitted to the Petitions Secretary through September 27, 2011. According to church law, "Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference ...".

Detailed instructions for submitting a petition are available on the General Conference website at gc2012.umc.org. Submit petitions via e-mail to petitions@umpublishing.org or through the website. The deadline has passed for petitions submitted through U.S.P.S mail or by fax.

Eligible petitions are assigned to one of 13 legislative committees or the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Committees debate the proposals and determine whether to approve, amend, combine or reject them for recommendation to the full body of General Conference.

Questions about the petition submission process may be submitted by e-mail to Gary Graves, Petitions Secretary, at petitionsquestions@umpublishing.org.

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Pastoral appointments announced *continued from page 15*

Herbert Lowry, Jr; Goshen-Keener, Rochele Elaine Bailey from Genesis associate; Harry Hosier, Larry Robinson from New Hope; Hay Street Person St. campus, David Harvin; Marvin, Jane Marie Almon, full-time local pastor; Raeford, Adolph C. Smith from Richlands; Spout Springs (new church), Matthew Joseph Youngblood, full-time local pastor; Solid Rock Community campus associate, Michael Bass; Solid Rock Spring Lake campus associate, Donna Thompson; Solid Rock Woodside-Mt. Ariel campus associate, Michael Field Sadtler; Tabor, William Rufus Autry, Jr., part-time local pastor; Union, William H. Altman, Jr., from Marvin; Victory-Cumberland, Michael Paul Smith from Victory; and Wesley Chapel, Kyle Burrows, part-time local pastor.

GOLDSBORO DISTRICT

Duplin, Johnston, Lenoir, Wayne, and Wilson counties
The Rev. Charles M. Cook, district superintendent

Antioch, Walter Gaskins, retired supply; Asbury (Smithfield), Richard Hill from Ronces Chapel; Edgerton Memorial, Joshua David Kurtz, student pastor; Elevation associate, Berry O. Barbour, retired supply; Eureka, Michele Karen Clark from Faison; Faison, Jabe Lenwood Largen, student pastor; Fremont, Deirdre Britt from Hampstead associate; Jefferson: Alice Wade Davis from extension ministry position; Kenly-Buckhorn, John David Amon from Hart-Speight charge; New Hope, Stephen Michael Wellman, full-time local pastor; Ronces Chapel, Gerald Michael Whatley, part-time local pastor; Rose Hill, James C. Reed, retired supply; Salem, Sandra B. Schaller from St Pauls (St. Pauls); Pikeville: St. Joseph, Tommy Haynes from Love Joy; and Zion, F. Douglas Johnson from Jefferson.

GREENVILLE DISTRICT

Beaufort, Craven, Edgecombe, Greene, Hyde, Lenoir, Martin, and Pitt counties
The Rev. Elizabeth Hackney Hood, district superintendent

Bath, William M. Creech from Pikeville: St. Joseph; Bethel, Diane Christian-son from Goshen-Keener; Campbell's Creek, Leslie Painter Mills, part-time local pastor; Epworth (Vanceboro), JoAnn Rae Lampley, full-time local pastor; Farmville, William Edward Price from Epworth (Vanceboro); Hart-Speight, Sylvia Tripp, interim supply; Holly Springs, TBS; Jamesville-Siloam, Christie Ann Burley from an extension ministry position; Salem, Stephen E. Smith from Bethel; St. James (Tarboro), Bobby P. Tyson, Jr., from Troy: Trinity; and Unidos por Cristo, Ernesto Barriguete, interim supply.

NEW BERN DISTRICT

Carteret, Craven, Jones, Onslow, and Pamlico counties
The Rev. Dennis M. Goodwin, district superintendent

Cedar Island, Jim Goodwin, retired supply; Clarks, Michael Register, Sr., retired supply; Havelock: First, L. Alan Sasser from Davis Street; Morehead City: First, Michael D. Frese from Elizabeth City: First; Healing Waters (new church), William Earl Spencer, Jr., interim supply; Jacksonville new church, Peter George Singetary, Jr., full-time local pastor; Northwoods Hispanic/Latino minister, Jose Mora, part-time local pastor; Richlands, Roger D. Cope from Scotland Neck/Rich Square; Riverside, Carol Ann Grantham, part-time local pastor; Straits-North River, Rosario Villaraos Bottari, full-time local pastor; Trinity: Jacksonville associate, Jeanette Hicks from another conference; Trinity (Marshallberg)-Smyrna, Karen C. Howell from Trinity: Jacksonville associate.

RALEIGH DISTRICT

Franklin, Johnston, and Wake counties
The Rev. Jonathan Strother, district superintendent

Andrews Chapel, Ray Teague from BU: Lebanon; Apex associate, Kristen D. Williams from Edgecombe Parish; Apex associate, Leah Farriba Skaggs from Rose Hill; Apex associate new campus, Owen Edwards Barrow; Edenton Street associate, Raygina Lentz Beale from another denomination; Edenton Street associate, David Joseph Allen, full-time local pastor; Cary: First associate, Colin Llewellyn Snider from Kitty Hawk associate; Franklinton, Helen Despina Champion from Wake Forest associate; Hayes Barton associate, Jesse Wayne Baker, full-time local pastor; Highland associate, David M. Stark from Shiloh; Holly Springs, Kelly Lyn Logue from White Plains associate; Horne Memorial, G. Rosser Carter III from Sunrise; Morrisville new church, Jay D. Helms from Bethel-Snow Camp; Piney Grove, Robert A. Mosher, part-time local

pastor; Pleasant Grove associate, Meredith K. Snider, full-time local pastor; St. Andrews, Wayne M. Hicks from Nashville; St. Francis associate, Darrell Copeland from another denomination; St. Mark's associate, Tawny Leigh Bernhardt, part-time local pastor; Sunrise, Thomas W. Newman from GR: Salem; Wendell, James T. (Trip) Lowery III from Mighty Wind; White Plains associate, Regine Jean-Baptiste, full-time local pastor; and Wilson Temple, Regina Henderson from Harry Hosier.

ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT

Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties
The Rev. Leonard E. Fairley, district superintendent

Barker, TBS; Cordova, Brooks Gale from Water's Edge; Ellerbe-Mt. Pleasant, Elizabeth W. Polk from Spring Hope; Fellowship, Tony Joyner from Coats; Laurinburg: First, M. Eugene Tyson from Fellowship; Pembroke: First, Michael Elliott from Raeford; Gibson, Patricia Stone retired supply; Hickory Grove, Kelly Mylor Hunt from St. John-Gibson; Ledbetter, TBS; Lumberton Circuit, Donnie Robinson, interim supply; New Hope, Dora Russell Dorsey from Philadelphia; Norman, Dena White from leave of absence; Philadelphia, Walter McLeod from Wilson Temple; Rowland, Wayne Farrah, interim supply; Sandy Plains, Gregg Allen Presnal from Granville Circuit; St. John, Myron and Barbara Dice from Sandhills Circuit; St. Pauls (St. Pauls), Bruce Skipper from Lumberton Circuit; and W. Rockingham, Ben Horton from Dixon's Chapel.

ROCKY MOUNT DISTRICT

Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, Warren, and Wilson counties
The Rev. Caswell Shaw, district superintendent

Bailey Charge, Eldrick R. Davis from First: Havelock; Bethlehem-Shady Grove, Debora Staggs Matthis, part-time local pastor; Edgecombe Parish, David C. Hutchins from Bailey Charge; Elm City, Janine Youngstrom from Jamesville-Siloam; Jerusalem, Joshua Nelson Horne, part-time local pastor; Littleton, W. Arthur Warren, Jr. from Murfreesboro; Mt. Zion, K. Leo Bennett from Piney Grove; Nashville, Ralph A. Brown from First: Laurinburg; Sandy Cross, Ron Gurganus from Cumberland; Scotland Neck-Rich Square, Robert W. Licht from Littleton; Smith, Thomas W. Schwartz, retired supply; Spring Hope, Scott Alan Shaffer, student pastor; Wesley Memorial, Deborah Vanderford from Ocean View associate; and Winstead, Paul R. Dunham from Farmville.

SANFORD DISTRICT

Chatham, Lee, Montgomery, and Moore counties
Dr. Reginald Ponder, Sr., district superintendent

Cathage, Mattheue Locklear from Sandy Plains; Doub's Chapel, Laura A. Dunlap from Elm City; First (Troy)-Uwharrie, William Arnold Saunders from First (Troy); Lemon Springs deacon, Joyce Horn from Horne Memorial; Love Joy, Judith B. Drye from Fremont; Mt. Pleasant (Pittsboro) James Grady Jones, Jr. from Lea's Chapel; Piney Grove, James G. Folks from Rock Creek; Pittsboro, Benjamin D. Alexander from Front Street associate; Sandhills Circuit, Eric R. Joyce from Doub's Chapel; Southern Pines associate, T. Judson Dunlap from Sandy Cross; and Trinity (Troy), Kelly Summers Sorg from Bath.

WILMINGTON DISTRICT

Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties
The Rev. Francis Daniel, district superintendent

Dixon's Chapel, William Negron, Jr., part-time local pastor; Fifth Avenue, Joseph L. Peterson, retired supply; Hampstead, Randall Grey Maynard from St. Andrews; Purdie, TBS; and Rocky Point, James R. Hines, retired supply.

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An Alternative Way To Travel With Someone You Can Trust



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

August 2011

August 7, 2011

Text: Judges 13:1-8, 24-25
"Walk in God's Path"

First, the Israelites did what was "evil in the sight of the Lord" (Judges 13:1). That's the way it is: humankind (read "you and me"!) do not always think something is evil that God finds evil. God's eye sight is better than ours! For example, even if culture and common practice see no evil in unloving, greedy power plays, God sees it differently. Key to this verse is not what we see as evil, but what God sees as evil.

Second, God is able to use the unknown and powerless to accomplish God's work. This account of Samson begins with "a certain man" and his wife whose name is not even recorded (Judges 13:2). If we sometimes feel that we are not in any way significant in God's kingdom work, we might do well to remember Manoah and his wife. In God's story, the work of the Lord is unfolded in faithfulness, not in prestige, power, or place.

Third, Samson's mother took the nazirite vow: eat kosher and have no strong drink (Judges 13:4). See Numbers 6:1-21. Preparation for spiritual leadership calls for spiritual discipline. Those of us in the Wesleyan tradition see such discipline as a means of God's grace: prayer, Bible study, fasting, work with the poor, frequent Communion, systematic worship.

Fourth, in some verses not noted

August & September

adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

as part of this week's study (Judges 13:15-16), Samson's parents want to prepare a thank you dinner for the messenger who had spoken to them in God's behalf. The messenger declines and says, in effect, "Worship God instead." When we worship, the question is not "Did I get anything out of the service?" The question is "Was God glorified and worshiped in this service?"

Fifth, as Samson grew, the Lord continued to bless him (Judges 13:24). Do we continue to draw on a one-time experience with God or do we expect/anticipate/need God to continue to bless? Our Wesleyan tradition teaches that we can backslide from faith. We need to continue to be open to God's means of grace so God can continue to bless us.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In a biography of Francis Asbury (*American Saint*, Oxford University Press), John Wigger writes: "Heat rolled in waves from parched soil as Asbury and Whatcoat made their way through Pennsylvania and Ohio in late summer 1805. 'The earlier fruits and productions of the year have been very abundant, but without rain, the latter fruits and grain must fail,' Asbury observed. It might have been a metaphor for the church."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Revive us again, O Lord. Open us to all the leading of Your Spirit, so that our worship might be pure and our service might be filled with love..."

August 14, 2011

Text: Ruth 1:8-18
"Choosing a Community"

What happened to Orpah?

Persons who are familiar with popular biblical stories can recount what happened to Ruth, a kind of happy

ending with Ruth's finding a husband (Boaz) with their children forming a line that leads to King David (Ruth 4:13-22).

But what happened to Orpah? She was Naomi's other daughter-in-law, the one who reluctantly decided to stay in her native Moab rather than go with Naomi to an uncertain future in Judah.

Ruth and Orpah made different choices, but there is no sense in which Orpah is condemned because she chose to stay in her homeland, Moab.

In fact, Naomi lifts her up as a good example, encouraging Ruth also to stay in Moab (Ruth 1:15). In fact, at an early point in the story, Naomi seems to think Ruth has chosen unwisely, but rather than make a stink about it, Naomi just shuts up and lets Ruth go with her (Ruth 1:18).

There is a legend that Orpah married again and her descendants included Goliath, the giant whom David killed with the well-aimed rock from his shepherd's sling shot. That's a tidy ending to the story: Ruth's great-grandson David doing battle with Orpah's great-grandson Goliath. Hmmm. It's a bit too tidy.

As the title of this week's lesson indicates, sometimes we have to choose among the communities in which we live.

For some, it is Employment Community versus Family Community. For another, it might be Church Community versus Cultural Acceptance Community. For one, it might be Justice Community versus the Community of My Comfort.

As the trilogy of Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah unfolds, it is clear that choosing between competing communities can be very difficult (Ruth 1:8-18). In a black and white world, it would seem that one choice is good and the other is bad. In a gray world, it is not that simple. I don't know that Orpah made a bad choice.

Maybe Orpah stayed in Moab, remembered Naomi's faithfulness to Yahweh, trusted God, created a small enclave of believers, and planted the seed that grew into a faithful remnant who did not worship the gods of the Moabite state religion.

Maybe.

I don't know.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Generation Rising* (Abingdon), Arnold Oh has written: "(The church) is no longer sure how the Christian faith is distinguished from good citizenship."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Decisions! Lord, help me..."

August 21, 2011

Text: Ruth 2:8-18
"Empowering the Needy"

Can I let you in on a secret? As I sat at my computer, ready to explore this week's study text, ready to be open to God's revealed Word, I fell asleep.

The insistent vibration of my cell phone woke me up.

The computer screen was just as I had left it: blank.

I had read and re-read the text. There seemed to be nothing of unusual insight there. There seemed to be nothing of "I've never thought of that before."

I stared at the verses. There seemed to be just the same story I had read and read before. Same old, same old. I dozed off.

Ruth 2:8-18 is interesting enough: flirting (v. 8), special favors (v. 9), mutual admiration society (vv. 10-13), great finger food (vv. 14-16), and sharing (vv. 17-18). But I've heard it all before.

Suddenly it hit me. This is like what preachers face on Easter Sunday: we know that it is important but what can we say that has not been said before?

And that becomes the good news of the text; the good news is that it has been said before. Think about it: the story seems to be unfolding at two levels: romance and generosity.

The good news is that God's very gracious gift can come in very human relationships. That is hardly a surprise for us who speak of the Word becoming flesh (John 1:14).

The good news is that the same old story shows up throughout the Scripture. If it does not seem alarmingly different, it is because it is not alarmingly different.

The Bible speaks of this sameness a lot: Jesus is the first and the last (Revelation 1:17); Yahweh says he is at the beginning and at the end (Isaiah 48:12); Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8); Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58); the Lord is the same and the Lord's years shall never end (Hebrews 11:2); Christ is the one who was, who is, and who is to come (Revelation 1:4).

So, Ruth 2:8-18 is the same story I have read a lot. It even gave me a

See "Bible Study," page 20

MARRIAGES

Congratulations to Howard James (Burlington: New Hope-Purley Charge) and Claudia White who were married on May 21 in Leland.

Congratulations to Christi Dye (Burlington: Christ) and Will Johnson who were married on May 28 in Chapel Hill.

Congratulations to Richard L. Bryant (Raleigh: Trinity) and Mary P. Novak on their recent marriage. A Service of Recognition of their marriage was celebrated at Trinity UMC on May 29, following the 11:00am worship service.

1st anniversary celebrated at The Place of Possibilities

All God's Children UMC celebrated the one year anniversary of their new building "The Place Of Possibilities" on May 22.

The Place Of Possibilities was built to help All God's Children UMC carry out its mission, "To alleviate suffering and hardship and teach, educate and enlighten (empower) the children of northeastern NC so that they can break the circle of poverty and become dedicated and responsible citizens."

The idea that the cycle of poverty for persons in Bertie and surrounding counties can be broken and the American Dream pursued is becoming a reality through The Place of Possibilities with a focused system of activity and support led by Dr. Laura Early.

The Place of Possibilities offers an After School program, basketball programs, youth programs, nutrition and weight-loss programs, Cub Scouts, Older Children (Senior) programs, and has become the hub of worship while roof repairs are done on the church building.

A literacy program will be offered again this summer and the first All God's Children Outreach Service Project was hosted in June to help the victims of the recent hurricanes.

In August, The Place of Possibilities begins a training and employment phase with industrial sewing machines being installed.



A child and coach from the basketball program held at The Place of Possibilities.

around the CONFERENCE



Greater Heights UMC graduates

Thirty-two seniors who graduated from Clayton High School are active members of Greater Heights UMC in Clayton. GHUMC pastor Matt Evans says that the principal of the high school, Clint Eaves (center of back row), was so impressed by how the seniors from the church acted and how they changed their classmates for the better, that the principal and his family now call GHUMC their home.

Agape Inn puppet theatre celebrates 40 years of ministry

By Andrew Bennett *

Nestled in a crowded corner of the boardwalk at Carolina Beach, lies a tiny green building with a sign reading "Agape Inn." Approach during the evening and bear witness to a crooning mouse, a rapping bear, a wise-cracking camel and any number of wild-haired bright performers. This is the Agape Inn Puppet Theatre, and it's going to be a wild ride.

The Agape Inn was founded in 1971 as part of the "Federal Point Resort Ministry." This was a communal effort of many churches in the Federal Point area (Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, and Fort Fisher), and existed to provide a Christian Ministry to the people who visited the area in spring and summer. While the Federal Point Resort Ministry has since dissolved, the Agape Inn continues to teach young and old alike the Gospel through a dedicated team from St. Paul UMC in Carolina Beach.

For 40 years, the ministry's objective has remained steadfast: to bring the message of Christ's love and salvation to visitors and members of the community. This is carried out through the presentation of songs and skits performed with puppets.

The puppet performances at the Agape Inn cover a wide range of topics, from peer pressure to healthy

living. They also have shows for almost any Bible story and shows for holidays and seasons.

Before each song, a Bible story relating to the topic is read aloud to the audience, in words that even the youngest children can understand. In addition to the music at the Agape Inn, each puppet show contains a dose of humor and wit, dished out by the announcer Cameron D. Camel. The laughs are always clean and family friendly.

St. Paul's, Puppet Ministry Director Darla Seefluth runs the ministry with her team of volunteer puppeteers (ages nine to 90) and staff. Her staff holds puppetry training seminars and workshops. In addition, groups visit Agape Inn and learn to manage a puppetry team in their own church.

Catch the Agape Inn's performances Thursday-Sunday at 8 p.m., from Memorial Day to Labor Day at the corner of Harper Ave. on the Carolina Beach Boardwalk.

Some of the songs performed can be seen at www.youtube.com/agape-innpuppets.

Any group wanting information about the program may call 910-458-5310 or send an e-mail to seefluthd@bellsouth.net.

* Andrew Bennett is youth minister at St. Paul UMC in Carolina Beach.

Paul W. Brumsey leaves legacy to Sharon UMC

By Susie Spruill *

During his later years, Paul W. Brumsey established a Living Trust in which he named Sharon UMC as one of the beneficiaries of his estate. From the legacy, Sharon has received a gift of \$126,000.

Honoring Brumsey's request, a bronze plaque has been mounted "In loving memory of James Brumsey, Jr. and Sybil R. Brumsey," his siblings who predeceased him. The Rev. C. Renee Edwards, Trustee Chair Claude Rollins, Council chair James Guard, Linda Kimble, and Teddy Driggs dedicated the plaque given in memory of Brumsey's siblings.

Paul W. Brumsey grew up in the rural village of Poplar Branch. He and his brother James and sister Sybil attended Sharon UMC. He joined the Navy as a young man and served in WWII.

After his Navy experience, Paul settled in Long Beach, CA, returning to Poplar Branch to visit his family. Even after the death of his parents and siblings, Paul maintained a link to Poplar Branch through corresponding with Linda Kimble, whose family purchased the Brumsey family home, and Teddy Driggs, a neighbor.

* Susie Spruill is chair of the memorial committee at Sharon UMC.



Greater Piney Grove honors 100-year old member

Friends and family gathered at Greater Piney Grove UMC on Sunday, April 10, to honor Mrs. Mattie Ishmael for her 100th birthday. She was presented with a plaque on behalf of the church. She is the first member of Greater Piney Grove UMC to reach the age of 100 years. The Rev. Luther Puckett, of Green Grove Baptist Church in Detroit MI and a former pastor of Mrs. Ishmael, was the preacher of the hour.

August/September Adult Bible study from page 18

brief nap.

But, look! Because it is the same story, God has given me a new gift: a recognition of the steadfast love that endures forever.

Because it is the same story, God has given me a new gift: a reminder that it is in the daily flow of life's routines that God most often comes.

Because it is the same story, God has given me a new gift: an awareness that God is waiting to bless us even within the boundaries of routine.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Susanna Wesley wrote (Wallace, ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, Oxford) "God generally works on (us) in a manner suitable to (our) nature."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Again, Lord, again..."

August 28, 2011

Text: Ruth 4:1-10

"Respecting Community Standards"

Boaz honored the traditions and laws of his community.

He wanted to marry Ruth (Ruth 4:13, 18). But he did not have first claim; that belonged to one who was closer in kin to Elimelech, Ruth's deceased father-in-law (Ruth 4:12).

Boaz went through the legal process to find out if that closer kinsman wanted the property that could rightfully be his (Ruth 4:4) and if he wanted to marry Ruth, which would have also been his responsibility (Ruth 4:5).

It turns out that this closer kinsman turned down all that and Boaz got the land and got Ruth.

I am impressed that Boaz risked losing something he very much wanted in order to keep faith with the laws and standards of his community. That is something to be valued, isn't it?

But there is another point to be considered. What is our moral responsibility when the customs of our community are unjust? Do we violate those laws? Do we seek to change them "from within the system"?

During the civil rights era, Martin Luther King, Jr. felt that he answered to a higher judge than the laws of the land.

He did not expect to be excused from the punishment the law provided for those who broke the law. It was a price he was willing to pay.

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church say: "...we recognize the right of individuals to dissent when acting under the constraint of conscience and, after

having exhausted all legal recourse, to resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or that are discriminately enforced.

Even then, respect for law should be shown by refraining from violence and by being willing to accept the costs of disobedience" (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 164F).

Should an individual leave a country (or denomination!) if she or he does not agree with the laws of that place?

How does one balance the wisdom of the community with the leading of one's own heart and mind?

How should the community respond to those within the community who choose to violate community standards?

Think of almost any matter of social impact: slavery, war, property rights, rights of women, racial relationships, human sexuality.

Community standards on each of these have varied from time to time. Let's honor Boaz for his respect for the law, but let's ponder how God has led some others to other difficult conclusions.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Black's Law Dictionary (Thomson West) defines law as "The regime that orders human activities and relations through systematic application of the force of politically organized society, or through social pressure, backed by force, in such a society."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Write Your law on my heart..."

September 2011

(Small Disclaimer: In order to meet publishing deadlines, I have written these reflections before the titles of sessions were available from Cokesbury. You might double check the session titles.)

September 4, 2011

Text: Proverbs 3:1-12

"Righteousness and Wisdom"

Translators can have a field day in working with this week's study text.

For starters, is the first verse "Do not forget my teaching...keep my commandments" (NRSV) or is it "Do not forget my teaching...guard my commands" (NEB) or is it "Forget not my law...keep my commandments" (KJV) or is it "Remember my teachings and instructions and obey them completely" (CEV) or is it "Don't forget what I teach you and remember what I tell you to do" (TEV) or is

it "Follow my instructions" (TLB)?

However this verse (Proverbs 3:1) gets translated, there seem to be two dimensions at work: (1) remembering what God wants us to do and (2) doing it.

Both of these dimensions are part and parcel of what it is to be in relationship with God.

It is not enough to know what God teaches, if we do nothing about it. It is not enough to be pious and active, unless we know what is God's instruction.

The word translated "law" or "teaching" or "instruction" is *tôrâh*. Some biblical scholars say the root of the word *tôrâh* is a word that means "to point out something."

It is as if God is pointing out the way that will lead to wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 3:13).

But think about it: I might ask you how to get to the grocery store and you can point to show me the way, but if I do not follow your directions, it is unlikely that I'll find the store.

That is why the writer of this proverb has given two elements to our relationship with God: God's pointing (teaching law, instruction) and our living it out accordingly.

How awesome it is to be trusted by God!

We are not robots or puppets that simply do as programmed.

Even after showing us the way (Proverbs 3:1a), God sets us free to make a choice (Proverbs 3:1b).

What Someone Else Has Said:

Saint Augustine wrote ("On Grace and Free Will," ed., J. Robert Wright, Vol. IX, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, InterVarsity Press) "What of this fact that God in so many passages commands that all his precepts be kept and carried out? How can he command if there is no free choice?...What do such numerous passages from the Old Testament show except that a person's will is possessed of free choice?"

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Eternal God of all age, open my ears that I might hear You in the hurts of the world; open my heart that I might live out the love You give me..."

September 11, 2011

Text: Proverbs 4:10-15, 20-27

"From Generation to Generation"

Ten years.

Few of us studying this week's lesson will do so without remembering that it has been ten years since the horrific attack on the World Trade Center.

We shall recall where we were when we first learned the news of those dreadful moments.

We shall ponder how we shall help future generations avoid such calamity.

Proverbs 4 is a collection of parental advice, so perhaps it is especially appropriate for our reflection as we think how to pass on "post-9/11 advice" to others.

Who would not want to say to his or her children: "When you walk, your step will not be hampered; and if you run, you will not stumble" (Proverbs 4:12)?

Would we not hope that every parent would instruct her or his children: "Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evildoers" (Proverbs 4:14)?

The key to this advice is Proverbs 4:23: "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life."

In other words, what you have got working on the inside will eventually find its way to the outside!

The word translated "vigilance" is a strong word, implying guarding the heart as one might guard a prison with a giant wall.

In fact, the root for the word is a term meaning "build a hedge." Do not let little evils into your heart where they might grow into big evils. (As Matthew 5:18 teaches: "...whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments...will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.")

The advice is tough advice: Don't harbor ill feelings that can turn into violence; don't let envy into your life because it can turn into desperate bitterness; don't speak bad things about another because soon words might not be enough; don't seek revenge because its swath is wide and circular; don't label others because labels can keep us from seeing within another's heart.

Hate and its expressions grow from tiny seeds, so "turn your foot away from evil" (Proverbs 4:27).

See "Bible Study," page 22

DEATHS

CHRISMON, Jackie, widow of Pete Chrismon, died June 8. A funeral service was held at Apex UMC on June 18.

DODSON, Sara Foster, widow of Sam Dodson, died June 21. A graveside memorial service was held June 24 in Asheboro.

calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help connect campus ministers with UM college students

Churches are asked to submit names and contact information of 2011 high school graduates, as well as the student's intended college or university for enrollment in the fall. This mid-year entry into the conference Online Data Collection System is crucial to campus ministers at public universities and community colleges. College admissions offices do not provide students' names to campus ministers and students are not required to indicate religious preference when they enroll. Help make the connection for students and a campus ministry at their school of choice.

Apply by Aug. 10 for 2011 Ethnic Local Church grant from GBCS

Aug. 10 is the deadline to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants are to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership development as they engage in social justice. To qualify for grant consideration, applicants must be either: a United Methodist local church, district, annual conference, racial/ethnic caucus, or other affiliated ethnic group/organization; or an ecumenical group/organization working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization whose program has an impact on at least one United Methodist ethnic minority local church.

Two funding periods are available for consideration: Jan. 10 is deadline for the spring cycle and Aug. 10 for the fall. The Ethnic Local Church Grants program is to strengthen congregations through education, advocacy or leadership development for social justice engagement. Grants are awarded twice each year. Grant recipients must be programs initiated by or developed in partnership with one or more United Methodist ethnic minority local churches. Racial/ethnic persons shall be the majority of those served by the program. All applicants must have a supervisory board consisting of a majority of ethnic minority persons that shall make all policy decisions.

The project must focus on needs identified by ethnic local churches as they address one or more chronic social problems or concerns, such as housing, employment, health care, human rights, education, the environment and racism. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church contained in its Book of Discipline, (¶¶s 160-165) can provide more information on denominational social justice positions.

Each funding request will be considered on its own merits with no required minimum or maximum amount. All funding from GBCS must be used for programmatic components and not for salaries, purchase of equipment, purely administrative costs, and direct delivery of services or building construction.

Intent of the grants program is to provide start-up money. Therefore, priority goes to first-time applicants. Priority consideration shall be given to programs that are part of a Comprehensive Plan of an Annual Conference.

For more information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie (nchristie@umc-gbcs.org), GBCS assistant general secretary, Education & Leadership Formation, at (202) 488-5611 or download the application at Ethnic Local Church Grant.

Academy for Spiritual Formation Retreat — Sept. 25-30

The Academy is a five-day retreat which combines study with two established faculty members, time for personal reflection and meditation, frequent worship with liturgy, singing and the Eucharist, rest, and time with a community of adults who are seeking to grow closer to God and others. Held at Trinity Center, Salter Path, the facility includes walking paths and a chapel on the Bogue Sound.

Faculty include: Roberta Bondi lecturing on early Christians who retreated to the desert to practice their faith; Bruce Rigdon, a retired pastor and seminarian, discussing the Orthodox practices, their similarities and differences with the United Methodist denomination and how the church developed after the Great Schism between the Catholics and Orthodox in 1054.

Registration fees are \$750 for those wishing single rooms and \$630 for

those willing to share a room (assuming a roommate is available). Call Robin Harry at 800-849-4433 or email rharry@nccumc.org to register.

Convocation & Pastors' School - Oct. 10-11

The 2011 Convocation & Pastors' School - Oct. 10-11 at Duke Divinity School. Learn more and register visit, <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/lifelong-learning/cps-2011>.

Lake Junaluska Peace Conference focuses on poverty - Nov. 13-15

The 2011 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, "Poverty, Abundance, and Peace" features Senator and former presidential candidate George McGovern; David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; and Bishop Nkula Ntambo of the Katanga Conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The conference will be held Nov. 13-15. This year, the conference will focus on seeking economic justice for all of God's children. The Conference will also feature an interfaith panel featuring Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars on the topic, "Our Sacred Texts Speak to Us in Regard to Peace, Justice and Economics." Scholarships available for full-time college and seminary students. For information on the Peace Conference and to register, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.

Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land in January 2012

Travel with Bishop Al Gwinn as he leads a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 2012. Depart on Jan. 25 and visit all the holy sites, worship together, experience the teachings of Bishop Gwinn, and walk where Jesus walked. This will be the last opportunity to travel with Bishop Gwinn as the episcopal leader of the NC Conference. Call Harold Salmon, Conference Director of Tour Ministries at 919-377-2950 or go to <http://nccumc.org/bishop/2012-holy-land-trip/> for more information.

conference CALENDAR

July

- 13-15 African American Preaching Summit, Lake Junaluska
- 18-23 Annual Conference Session for Youth (ACS), Methodist College, Fayetteville
- 20-23 School of Christian Mission, Methodist College, Fayetteville

August

- 8-11 One in the Spirit: Age to Age Conversations Older Adult event, Lake Junaluska
- 10 Camp Don Lee Festival of Friends and Defenders' Cup Regatta 12:00pm

- 11-13 Conference Youth Council Retreat
- 21 Golden Cross Sunday
- 22-24 2011 Convocation on the Rural Church
- 28 Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries Sunday

September

- 11 Legacy Sunday
- 20 Leading an Externally Focused Church, Nashville UMC, Nashville, NC, Bishop's Day Apart in partnership with the Academy for Leadership Excellence, 9:30am

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

August/September Adult Bible study from page 20

What Someone Else Has Said:

John Westerhoff III (*Values for Tomorrow's Children*, Pilgrim Press) wrote: "Daily, each person who claims to be a Christian communicates through his words and actions his understanding of the Christian faith. In the same manner the church, as a community and institution, communicates through its corporate life the nature and character of the Christian faith."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Fill my heart, O Lord, so there is no room for wrong..."

September 18, 2011

Text: Proverbs 15:21-33
"Teaching Values"

The values of the Christian tradition are countercultural.

Ordinarily, culture thinks that God favors those who have power and position and privilege.

Leastways, those people seem to be the ones we most often honor and turn to for advice and decision-making.

But the message of Proverbs 15:25 speaks of another perspective: "The Lord tears down the house of the proud, but maintains the widow's boundaries." Some theologians call this "God's preferential treatment for the poor."

In ancient times, boundaries were established by placing stones at the corner of the property.

A person with evil intent might come at night and move those stones, thus stealing land from a neighbor.

The text says "God maintains the widow's boundaries." It is God's will that no one take advantage of the vulnerable. (Compare Exodus 22:22 ("You shall not abuse the widow or the orphan"); look at Hosea 5:10 ["...on (those who remove the landmark) I will pour out my wrath like water]; consider Luke 1:52 ("He has brought down the powerful for their thrones, and lifted up the lowly").

In Proverbs 15:25, the widow represents all who are vulnerable.

In the time this text was written, women had no legal protection except from father or husband. If there was "no man in her life" she was fair game for any scheme or abuse.

By the time of Jesus, children were often seen as just so much property.

In our own national history, persons of African descent were once seen as chattel.

Today, boy soldiers become vic-

tims of raging hatred.

And, there are persons who are trapped for fear that any admission of sexual orientation would subject them to discrimination and exclusion.

Vulnerable?

Do you hear an echo of Jesus' declaration (Luke 4:18-19) that He came to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed?

It is hard for me to sort out the implications of this verse. After all, tonight at my home the question is not whether or not we shall have anything to eat, but "Shall we eat here tonight or go out to a restaurant?"

What are the implications of Proverbs 15:25? Surely, the Lord does not expect me to make any changes in my life!

What Someone Else Has Said:

Donald Dayton has written in *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (ed., Douglas Meeks, Kingswood Books): "Anyone who has read at all in the Journal of Wesley will know that Wesley was systematic in his cultivation of the poor. He made it a regular practice from his Oxford student days to visit the sick, the poor, and those in prison, and he regularly insisted that his followers do likewise."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Is it I, Lord?..."

September 25, 2011

Text: Proverbs 25:1-10
"Wisdom and Discernment"

This week's study text gives lots of hints about the legal system.

The king will seek for the truth in court trials (Proverbs 25:2). The king as judge has the responsibility of getting crime off the streets (Proverbs 25:4-5).

One should be careful not to get puffed up about one's courtroom savvy (Proverbs 25:6-7). Do not bring frivolous lawsuits (Proverbs 25:8).

Try to settle things out of court (Proverbs 25:9). Gossip has no place in the courtroom (Proverbs 25:9-10).

Having taken a quick look at those verses, let go back to the first verse in this chapter: "These are other proverbs of Solomon that the officials of King Hezekiah of Judah copied."

King Hezekiah ruled in the eighth century before Christ. King Solomon ruled in the tenth century before Christ. Two hundred years separated these two kings.

In spite of that two century gap,

people in Hezekiah's entourage wanted to pass on the traditions of Solomon (Proverbs 25:1). Hezekiah was no slouch as a king (2 Kings 20:3, 20; 2 Chronicles 29:2; 2 Chronicles 32:27-29, 32), but he wanted to continue the wisdom of an earlier generation.

Just because he had great strength in his own time did not mean that he discarded the insights and work of an earlier time.

One sign of Hezekiah's greatness is precisely that: he built his contemporary reign on the solid foundation of his predecessor some two hundred years earlier.

There is a temptation to set aside "the wisdom and discernment" of our ancestors. Of course, all done in the past was not wonderful and not all of it should be emulated, but there is, as Hezekiah recognized, much to be preserved.

Ray Van Leeuwen says that the word translated "copied" (Proverbs 25:1) probably means edited and arranged—choosing the good stuff.

On the night I am writing this, I

took part in a worship service that included a country and western solo, a hymn translated from the Latin in the seventeenth century, a spiritual from the African American tradition, and a reading from twenty-first century authors.

There is power in the diversity of the Church's heritage and Hezekiah set us a good example in drawing on all of it.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Jonny Baker and Doug Gay (*Alternative Worship*, Baker Books) have written: "In a post-modern culture, tradition and continuity are essential gifts. Without tradition there would be no Christian faith. At a time when culture seems to be changing so fast, to be located in a 2000-year old tradition gives a real sense of 'weight,' a much needed anchor point in the world."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of Now, God of Then..."

Gottlieb is new head of Hinton Rural Life Center



Dr. Jacqueline Gottlieb

Dr. Jacqueline Gottlieb is now serving as president and CEO of the Hinton Rural Life Center, a mission agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.

Formed in 1960, Hinton is a resource and advocate for rural and smaller membership churches in the Southeast.

Gottlieb taught four years with the Wake County Public Schools and has 13 years of experience at the senior and executive levels in community action organizations. She has a love for the mountains in eastern North Carolina. She earned her bachelor's degree in Special Education from Western Carolina University and master and doctorate degrees in Occupational Education from NC State University.

She, her husband Mark and three children, Maryanne, Charlie, and Lauren moved in April to Hayesville to "share more intimately in 'The Hinton Experience' and the beauty of the mountains."

Hinton, an Advance Special of The UMC, is celebrating 50 years in ministry. It is in the south Appalachian mountains overlooking Lake Chatuge in Hayesville. The Center offers training and networking for clergy and laypersons, spiritual formation, and volunteer mission opportunities on the campus or in other locations.

For further information on how Hinton can help a group or to schedule a visit, call (828) 389-8336, toll free (866) 389-8336, or send an email to info@hintoncenter.org.

The Hinton website is available at www.hintoncenter.org.

UMM of St. James UMC honor eight members at its Recognition Banquet

By Chris Garcia *

United Methodist Men of St. James UMC in Greenville, honored eight of its members on May 20 at its inaugural Recognition Banquet.

The event, held in St. James Fellowship Hall, drew a full house, including widows of deceased members who were remembered through an In Memoriam slide show presentation prepared by Chris Garcia and introduced by Bill Watson, Jr.

St. James UMC Pastor, the Rev. Johnny Branch, opened the evening with a prayer asking God's blessings on the honorees and the food prepared by Scott McCann and served by members of Girl Scout Troop 274.

The featured speaker was the Rev. Dr. H. William Green of First UMC of Cary, who spoke on "The Heart of the Matter Is ...," on the heart as the center of men's ministry.

His talk addressed the motto of United Methodist Men: "Helping Men Grow in Christ, So Others May Know Christ."

Six of the eight honorees are members of the St. James' Cooking Crew: Woody Andrews, Tom Barrington, Dan Bishop, Tildon Brittle, Reggie Davis, and Robert Jessup.

These men form the backbone of St. James UMM's fundraising efforts by preparing the food for chicken barbecue dinners throughout the year.

They also lead the preparation of breakfast for UMM monthly meetings.

As presenter Mike Tart said of the group, "These guys are like the Marines - they are usually the first ones in and the last ones out, and continuously provide excellent results."

As a token of appreciation from the St. James UMM, each member of the Cooking Crew received a certificate and an apron embroidered with the UMM logo and his name.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of two Life Membership Awards.

Prior to the presentation, Tom Pauling, former president, announced that the St. James UMM Life Membership Award would be presented in honor of two deceased men who were instrumental in building a strong organization of UMM at St. James, Les Garner and Herschel Williams.

Members of both men's families were special guests of UMM at the Recognition Banquet.

Other special guests were Dr. Green's wife, Polly Green, and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Starnes. Starnes is the conference president of United Methodist Men.

Pauling gave the Life Membership award to member Marvin Little. "Marvin has been very active at St. James since moving to Greenville and becoming a church member with his wife Laura in 1966. Marvin joined the St. James UMM right away, and has been an active member ever since," Pauling said.

Little was the St. James UMM treasurer for many years and twice served as UMM president. He has participated in all UMM work projects. "We have some wonderful members of the St. James United Methodist Men but no one is more active and dedicated than Marvin Little," Pauling said.

Mike Board, St. James UMM treasurer, presented the Life Membership to member Edwin Yancey. Board talked about Yancey's journey of membership after moving to Greenville in 1969 and serving as a member of the cook crew before becoming president.

When Yancey moved away, he continued active UMM membership at Centenary UMC in Smithfield and then Benson Memorial UMC.

After returning to Greenville in 1991, Ed rejoined the St. James UMM and has continued to serve the organization.

Board quoted Yancey's explanation of why he has remained an active member of St. James UMM. "The UMM program is important because it is a service to its church and church members; it opens avenues of discipleship for its men; the monthly programs create awareness of needs and opportunities for service; and, when you work alongside someone, you come to know them better, you develop a bond of trust, and, therefore, you can accomplish more together."

Dr. Dennis Adams, associate pastor, closed the evening with a prayer of thanks for the leadership of Marvin Little and Ed Yancey, the opportunity to honor them and the kitchen crew members, and the opportunity to remember the work of deceased members who laid a strong foundation of service in the name of Jesus Christ at St. James.

* Chris Garcia is president of the St. James UMM.



ABOVE: The UMM of St. James UMC honored its kitchen crew members at a Recognition Banquet held May 20. (L-R) Tom Barrington, Woody Andrews, Dan Bishop, Robert Jessup, Reggie Davis, and Tildon Brittle received embroidered aprons for their years of behind-the-scenes service at UMM events. (Photos by Sandra Harvey)



Ed Yancey and his wife, Betty



Marvin Little and his wife, Laura

Sharon UMM supports Lower Currituck Food Pantry

The United Methodist Men of Sharon UMC in Poplar Branch rallied to the call that the Lower Currituck Food Pantry needed both monetary donations and non-perishable food to meet the needs of the community. The men's group sponsored a fried chicken dinner and called on members of the Sharon congregation to supply non-perishable food for the Lower Currituck Food Pantry as part of the National Feed Your Neighbor campaign.

As a result of this local mission, Teddy Driggs, president of Sharon UMM, presented a check in the amount of \$1,035.07 (total profit from the chicken dinner) and 24 bags of non-perishable groceries to Polly Gregory, director of the Lower Currituck Food Pantry. The Lower Currituck Food Pantry partners with the Albemarle Food Bank and receives food from the federal government. In addition, the Pantry depends upon monetary and non-perishable food donations from individuals, churches, businesses, civic groups and others in the area to serve the ever growing needs of the community. The Lower Currituck Pantry is staffed entirely by volunteers.



At the check presentation were: (L-R) Ernest Brickhouse, Booty Spruill, Polly Gregory (Director of Lower Currituck Food Pantry), Teddy Driggs (president of Sharon UMC's Men's Group), and Bob Gregory.



Members of area churches walked the streets of Hertford observing the 14 Stations of the Cross. At each Station, prayers were offered along with a reading about what happened to Jesus on his way to the cross. The Rev. Larry Bowden is shown holding a megaphone during the Stations of the Cross observance in Hertford. Behind him (L-R) are the Rev. Ed Rutenkroger of New Hope UMC (in white robe), the Rev. Sadot Mendez of Center Hill UMC (behind Bowden), the Rev. Ray Tavenner of the Perquimans Charge (in dark robe), and Chris Boyce, carrying cross. Over 80 people participated in the community-wide event.



Through the integration of technology into the overall learning experience, the Human Anatomy Laboratory will enable the PA Program to enhance the existing anatomy curriculum.

MU dedicates PA program buildings

By Robin Davenport
and Maria Sikoryak-Robins*

Methodist University celebrated the opening of the Human Anatomy Laboratory and Medical Lecture Hall for its Physician Assistant (PA) Program with a ribbon cutting, building dedication, and PA student-guided tours in April.

Congressman Mike McIntyre, with strong bipartisan support from the Cumberland County delegation, assisted the University in securing grants of \$876,000 for construction and equipment.

"These facilities reflect the heart of Methodist and will be a shining light of opportunity for years to come. I am honored to have played a role in making this day a reality," he said.

The Methodist University PA Pro-

gram was established in 1996 with a focus on addressing the primary care provider shortage nationally, and specifically in the underserved areas of North Carolina. The PA Program has an overall pass rate of 97% on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam and has grown in demand, averaging over 400 applications per year for 34 openings.

The new lab provides increased space, including 15 stations that can accommodate up to 56 students and staff members. The Medical Lecture Hall allows the PA Program to increase its class size with expanded classroom space.

* Robin Davenport is MU's vice-president for institutional advancement, and Maria Sikoryak-Robins is director of communications and publications.

Stations of the Cross event brings together nine churches from four denominations

By Vera Harrell and Larry Bowden*

Fourteen Stations of the Cross were observed by members from Hertford UMC, New Hope UMC, Epworth UMC, Oak Grove UMC, Cedar Grove UMC, Bagley Chapel Baptist Church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Up River Friends Church, and Center Hill UMC on Saturday, March 12.

At each Station, prayers were offered along with a reading about what happened to Jesus on his way to the cross. Beginning at Hertford UMC, the group headed to Cedarwood Cemetery making stops to observe four Stations of the Cross. Once in the cemetery, two more Stations were presented. Then the group, with their Station banners, headed down King Street to Church Street, stopping in the parking lot at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. Once on Church Street three more Stations were presented. The group of 80-plus finished their journey at Hertford UMC with the 14th Station. They then went into the sanctuary of Hertford UMC where communion was celebrated.

Sponsored by the Hertford UMC Evangelism Team, Stations of the Cross showed the 14 stations Jesus traveled on his way to the Cross, his death, and resurrection.

* Vera Harrell is a member and Larry Bowden is pastor of Hertford UMC.

Safe Sanctuaries training for clergy coming in October

By Carol Goehring *

Keeping safe the children and youth of our congregations is a priority for every local church. Policies and procedures are essential for the protection and safety of those under the age of 18 and also for the volunteer and employed staff who work with them.

The Safe Sanctuaries Team of the North Carolina Conference is providing training for all UM clergy in October. Four training events are scheduled and clergy may choose the one most convenient in terms of date or location. The content of every workshop is the same.

- ♦ Oct. 3 - Haymount UMC in Fayetteville from 9 a.m.-12 noon.
- ♦ Oct. 17 - Covenant UMC in Greenville from 9 a.m.-12 noon.
- ♦ Oct. 31, at the Methodist Building in Garner from 9 a.m.-12 noon.
- ♦ Oct. 22 make-up date from 9 a.m.-12 noon at a place in the Triangle to be determined.

Many of the lay members of the churches in the conference are trained and ready to serve in Sunday School classes, nurseries, weekday programs and youth events.

As the most public representative and leader of the local church, the pastor is responsible for implementing the policy that protects the vulnerable ones in the congregation. Often overlooked is the fact that volunteers, staff and the pastor also are vulnerable to false allegations.

A Safe Sanctuary policy, when fully implemented, protects both the

children and the adults who serve in their ministries.

The 1996 General Conference adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. Training was provided to acquaint pastors, staff and volunteers with the need for a policy for protection of children.

In recent years, senior and vulnerable adults have been added to the Safe Sanctuaries curriculum, as well as, an expanded concept of abuse which includes physical, emotional, sexual and ritual abuse and neglect.

While a church cannot guarantee the safety of every person, every church can be responsible for reducing the circumstances that could lead to harm or injury.

A first step is the development of a comprehensive policy and the procedures for resolving issues as they are reported.

The pastor is integral to the process, and attendance at one of the training workshops is required. Conference-wide Safe Sanctuaries training for clergy has not been offered in more than 10 years.

A year ago, all clergy were asked to attend a Sexual Ethics seminar. In a four-year rotation of training events, clergy are asked to attend one training each year dealing with sexual ethics, safe sanctuaries, stewardship and multicultural ministries/racial reconciliation.

* The Rev. Carol Goehring is NC Conference executive director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization.

From merger of two churches rises New Creation UMC



By Flo Johnston *

New Creation UMC is a new congregation in Durham, not a new church plant, but the result of a merger of two existing churches, Asbury Temple and Reconciliation.

Merger is a rare happening in The United Methodist Church, according to Durham District Superintendent Gray Southern, but in this case one that is expected to thrive for several reasons.

First, both congregations were at the top of their game, making growth happen in their own way. And second, one was struggling because of its lack of a physical

building and the other because of escalating costs of maintaining a large, old physical plant.

The Rev. Kevin Baker, who in 1998 was a founding pastor of Reconciliation, an intentionally multi-cultural and multi-racial church, said the two congregations are similar.

"We both love Christ and show it through passionate, lively worship, diverse music, reaching out to those on the margins of society, working for justice and relieving hunger."

Baker and the Rev. Shane Benjamin at Asbury Temple have both been assigned to new work, Baker to First UMC in Graham and Benjamin to Louisburg College where he will be the college chaplain.

The first pastor of New Creation is the Rev. David Morrow, 57, a retired Air Force chaplain.

One of the really significant reasons for merger came from the unique situations faced by the two congregations.

Asbury Temple had been worshipping in a 100-plus-year-old building that needed much work in order to improve safety and usability. Over the years, the church had delayed needed repairs to the roof, heating/cooling systems and other areas because of financial constraints.

Reconciliation, on the other hand,

ABOVE: (L-R) Danielle Hall and Randy Shepard, choir director, lead the congregation in music opening the worship service.

BELOW: The Rev. David Morrow talks with children during the children's worship time at the front of the sanctuary.



Hurricane Irene

NC Conference disaster response

See page 20

Photo courtesy NASA/NOAA GOES Project

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See "New Creation rises," page 6

“Drive Thru Prayers” outreach offered at Aldersgate in Durham

By Flo Johnston *

An experimental outreach on Tuesday, Aug. 2, from 4 to 6 p.m. by Durham's Aldersgate UMC was deemed a success by organizers.

It was called "Drive Thru Prayers" in which rush hour drivers on Umstead Road were invited to drive through the church parking lot.

Volunteers met them at their car window with a cold bottle of water and the offer of a prayer.

The outreach event attracted 20 rush hour drivers and the church's Outreach Committee has decided try holding the "Drive Thru Prayer" event on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, said Holly Hall, director of communication.

In the spirit of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, the congregation sees this event as taking church outside the walls of the sanctuary into the community.

Senior pastor Doug Lain and Jane

Brannock, minister of Christian formation, were among a small group of volunteers who greeted and prayed with those who stopped.

Umstead Road is heavily traveled during rush hour traffic each day, said Hall. Those who stopped for a prayer had all kinds of concerns, everything from a bad day at work to a family crisis or a death in the family.

"As United Methodists, we are always looking for ways to rethink church," she said. "This was a great opportunity to reach out and tell everyone that God loves them."

Right now, Aldersgate is striving to find new ways to do outreach into the community, she said. "We are concerned about taking the message to where the people are."

Hall says Drive Thru Prayers are "open, free and available just like God's love."

Aldersgate, located in northern

Durham County, has three services on Sundays, 8:15, 9:30 and 11 a.m. The early service is blended, meaning it incorporates elements of both traditional and contemporary worship; the 9:30 service is contemporary and the 11 a.m. is traditional. Worship attendance averages 380.

** Flo Johnston, a correspondent for The Durham News, one of the News & Observer's community newspapers, lives in Durham and can be reached by email at flo.johnston314@gmail.com.*



Doug Lain, senior pastor at Aldersgate UMC, shares a prayer with a driver visiting the church during a "Drive Thru Prayer" event. A team of volunteers were available in the church parking lot with a cold bottle of water and an offer of a prayer for the 20 drivers who stopped by during afternoon rush hour.



Southern named episcopal nominee by NCC delegation

After selecting the Rev. Gray Southern (sitting, center) as their episcopal nominee, conference delegation members to the General and Southeastern Jurisdictional Conferences, surrounded him and placed a hand on his shoulder or head while a prayer was given for him and the challenges he faces as a candidate to be elected a bishop in The United Methodist Church. Elections will be held during the SEJ Conference, July 18-30, 2012, when five bishops will be elected. *(Photo by Bill Norton)*

Team appointed to coordinate transition plan for new districts

Bishop Al Gwinn announced the appointment of the following persons to serve on the Transition Team for forming eight new districts in the North Carolina Conference: Linda Taylor, chair; Christine Dodson; Cashar Evans; Leonard Fairley; Milton Gilbert; Emily Innes; Cleve May; and David Peele.

In addition, the following were appointed "ex-officio members": Tim Russell and Becky Biegger. Bishop Gwinn will also serve as a member of this team.

The team met for its first official meeting on Friday, July 29. Updates will follow as the transition process unfolds.

The 2011 Annual Conference voted for the conference to move from 12 to eight districts, effective following the 2012 Annual Conference.

The *Discipline*, the denomination's official book of church law, says the Annual Conference will set the number of districts and the Bishop has the authority to decide on district lines.

Bishop Gwinn said any new district lines will only be decided after consultation with lay and clergy leaders and local congregations.

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Youth celebrate 60th anniversary of ACS

By Dennis Peay *

The 60th Annual Conference Session for Youth (ACS) convened July 18-23 with the theme "I Will."

Representing all 12 districts, over 200 youth and adults came to deepen their faith, worship, and give voice to the youth of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Tuesday night of ACS, participants celebrated 60 years of Conference Youth Ministry. Persons representing all six decades of ministry were in attendance for the multi-generational worship celebration.

Jay Locklear, Adam Seate, and Jimmy Crayton led music that highlighted the worship music of each decade.

Mike Safely, Powell Osteen, Bert Armstrong, Cliff Bobbitt, and Elizabeth and Ellen Frazier took participants on a historic ride through the years recalling their days as students and youth leaders.

The celebration predicated an inter-generational discussion regarding the future of Conference Youth Ministry.

All in attendance were invited to spend a portion of the evening looking at how conference youth ministry can strengthen youth and local churches while fulfilling Christ's mission of making disciples.

Group responses are being reviewed by the 2011-2012 Conference Youth Committee (CYC) and Conference Committee on Youth Ministries (CCYM) as they begin discerning and developing a vision for the future. Additional listening and discussion will be coming to communities across the conference in 2012.

Conference youth leadership elected

ACS 2011 concluded with the election and selection of new Conference youth leadership.

2011-12 Officers

The nearly 200 youth in attendance elected Landis Barber, senior from Brown's Chapel UMC in Pittsboro (Sanford District) as their 2011-2012 President.

The other officers are: Vice-President—Will Maness, St. Luke UMC, Sanford (Sanford District); Secretary—Madeline Graebe, Soapstone UMC, Raleigh, (Raleigh District); Treasurer—Josh Leslie, Horne Memorial UMC, Clayton (Raleigh District); and Legislative Affairs Person—Mary Warren Dickens, Lebanon UMC (Rocky Mount District).



The 2011-12 Conference Youth Committee members were elected during ACS held at Methodist University, Fayetteville. Shown below are: Front Row (L-R): Mary Warren Dickens, Will Maness, Landis Barber, Josh Leslie, Madeline Graebe. Back Row (L-R): Taylor Lilly, Ellen Beasley, Beth White, Jacob Blount, Jessica Harrison, Caitlin Hankins, Will Horner, Davey Pittard, Jennifer White, Allison Humphrey. Not Pictured: Rebecca Prather, Courtney Jennings, Richmond McIntyre, Katherine Riley, Caroline Freeman, Johnnie Wright. (Photo by Steve Isaacs, Cedar Cliff UMC, Graham)

Additionally, the five newly elected officers selected the following to serve on the CYC during 2011-12:

Members-at-Large

Jacob Blount, Laurinburg First UMC (RO), Caitlin Hankins, Wrightsboro UMC (WI); Jessica Harrison, Williamston UMC (GR); Allison Humphrey, Greater Heights UMC (GO); Taylor Lilly, Jacksonville - Trinity UMC (NB); Davey Pittard, St. Paul UMC (BU), and Jennifer White, Wesley Heights UMC (FA).

General and Jurisdictional Conference delegate Courtney Jennings,

Knightdale UMC (RA) was also selected to serve.

Designated Observers

Ellen Beasley, Erwin UMC (FA); Will Horner, Cokesbury UMC (DU), Rebecca Prather, White Plains UMC (RA); and Beth White, Jackson UMC (RM)

Junior High Representatives (elected at Breakaway and Kaleidoscope)

Caroline Freeman, St. Francis UMC (RA); Richmond McIntyre, Jerusalem UMC (RO); Katherine Riley, Horne

Memorial UMC (RA); Johnnie Wright, Westover UMC (RA).

The 2011-2012 CYC convened Aug. 12-4, at Camp Chestnut Ridge visioning for the coming Youth Ministry year.

The theme for the year "If not now, when? If not us, who?" calls youth to step up and lead the church now. Youth Events for 2012 will be announced at Pilgrimage, Nov. 11-13. For more information about Pilgrimage, visit www.nccpilgrimage.org.

* The Rev. Dennis Peay is chair of the NCCUMC Conference Committee on Youth Ministries and pastor of Cokesbury UMC in Henderson.

Conference leaders and UMM are preparing new plan for use of MERCI Center facility in Goldsboro

The North Carolina Conference UMC Cabinet and Trustees have accepted a proposal submitted by a group representing North Carolina United Methodist Men to assume ownership of the property and assets of the MERCI Center in Goldsboro. The proposal ensures the continuance of conference disaster response ministry and expands other ministry possibilities.

"We hope to have an unveiling of our plan and a reopening of the center January 1, 2012," said Charlie Gray, president of the Raleigh District UMM and a member of the leadership team presenting the proposal.

More details will be announced when available.

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Footprints

Youth mission camps have final season in Goldsboro; new plan for 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a personal account written by Bob Pavone, who served as volunteer coordinator for the MERCI Center in Goldsboro until the center's closing at the end of July. This was the final year the Footprints Summer Youth Mission Camps would be held at the center.

For summer 2012, plans are being finalized to hold Footprints at the three NCC camps: Don Lee near Arapahoe, Rockfish near Parkton, and Chestnut Ridge near Efland. Youth 13-years-of-age and older can select which camp to attend in 2012.

What a great summer it's been for the Footprints camp, and thank you for your support and lifting us up with your prayers! Despite a few kinks and broken equipment and extremely hot conditions, all has gone well.

We have had Footprints teams here from North Carolina and beyond.

From our state, youth Footprints teams have come from Eastover UMC; Bunn Hill UMC; Seymour Johnson AFB; Mineral Springs UMC; and First UMC - Morehead City.

From out of state, teams have traveled from Columbia City, Indiana; Good Shepherd UMC, Pittsburgh; and from Wyoming UMC of Wyoming, Delaware.

We were definitely blessed with this summer's Footprints staff which included Kelvin Gurley, Becky Minchew and Terri Hollowell.

Pastor Kelvin Gurley has a great gift of being able to interpret scripture in such a way that the kids really grasp the message. His ability to get the kids to interact with him is amazing, and they leave the worship services uplifted and excited about life.

I have to keep reminding Becky Minchew that they do make decaffeinated coffee!!! She is just a bundle of energy and that radiates to the kids as she directs their mission activities here at MERCI, packing kits, assisting with special needs children at Shiloh Farms, and the Goldsboro projects feeding and caring for the homeless and their children.

The teams have also found time to work on tornado damaged homes, elderly and less-fortunate families within our community and managed to have car washes to raise funds to buy the materials to use with these projects. Becky got a standing ovation from the Fort Wayne group at an awards ceremony. Need I say more!

We got a double whammy with Terri Hollowell! She brought to Footprints not only great organizational skills but also a great talent with her music.

Being a church musician, she not only provided music for worship services but also furnished entertainment on Friday nights bringing with her, friends and fellow musicians to accompany her.

The Footprints program has touched many lives. One example is Joey who was with the Good Shepherd group from Pittsburgh. Joey is 17 years old and his parents are divorced.

Joey was very upset that he had to leave MERCI to return home. Becky got a text message from him a few days after his team departed asking if he could come down to help out with the balance of the summer program.

His mother bought him a plane ticket. He loved the mission work at MERCI and would love to do this kind of work upon graduation from high school next year.



Footprints teams came to MERCI for the summer youth mission camps from within NC and from several other states.



The week-long camps included time for mission projects, worship, team-building and fun.



Teams worked on tornado-damaged homes, packed relief kits, helped a with special needs program and served the homeless.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org.

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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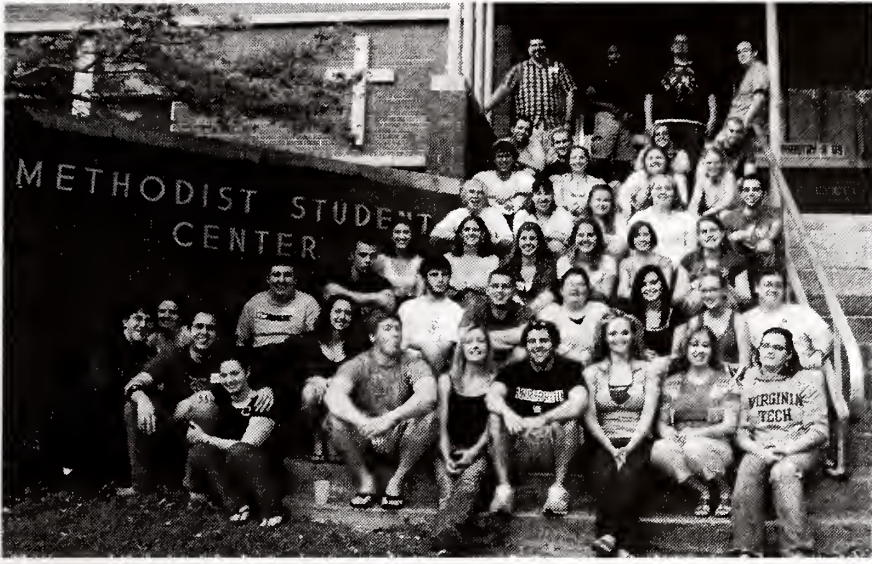
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Contact: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.



70th birthday event is Oct. 29-30 for Greenville Wesley Foundation

Anyone with an ECU Wesley Foundation connection is invited to a celebration at the Methodist Student Center in Greenville, Oct. 29 and 30.

"We are especially excited to have alumni return and share their memories of 'Wesley', says the Rev. Scott Wilkinson, now in his 13th year as director of the student center.

Wilkinson is hoping the fact that so many people are reconnecting with old friends through social media networks such as FaceBook will increase the number who come to the reunion.

A special request is being extended for photographs to be added to a presentation and for anyone with ECU Wesley connections to spread the word about the gathering. Photographs can be sent by email to WesleyFoundationECU@suddenlink.net or mailed to 501 E. 5th Street, Greenville, NC 27858.

The anniversary plans start on Saturday. "Early birds" can gather on the steps of the Methodist Student Center to watch the ECU Homecoming parade at 10 a.m.

The main activities will start at 11 a.m. upstairs in the auditorium. The program will consist of introducing alumni and hearing tales and testimonies from each decade, a power point presentation entitled "Thanks for the Memories" and a concert/sing-a-long by past and present Wesley Singers.

A free luncheon will be served in the Lion's Den (lower level) at 12:15 p.m. All activities will be wrapped up by 1 p.m. in plenty of time to get to the stadium for the 3:30 p.m. football game kick off.

Sunday morning all 70th Anniversary participants are invited to attend the 11 a.m. worship service at Jarvis Memorial UMC where the past and present Wesley Singers will provide special music.

For information on parking or to make your free meal reservation call 252-758-2030 or email Wesley-

FoundationECU@suddenlink.net. To visit the group's website, go to www.home.WesleyFoundationofGreenville.org.

Foundation history

The Greenville Wesley Foundation began in 1930 when the "Woman's Missionary Society" of Jarvis Memorial UMC made it possible to hire Zoe Anna Davis, a deaconess, to work with approximately 100 young women attending a Sunday School class from what was then the East Carolina Teachers College.

Davis immediately planned a weekend retreat, but due to a glitch in the mailing, no one received the invitations. So, she spent the weekend drawing up a constitution and by-laws to direct her work.

Later, a house was rented on Holly Street to be the first Methodist Student Center. Three more deaconesses were appointed over the years by the UM Board of Missions in New York. The last one was Mamiej (spelled correctly!) Chandler.

She was the one who finally organized the ministry into a formal Wesley Foundation in 1941. By the

See "Wesley Foundation," page 19

Wilson certified as fourth NCC men's ministry specialist

Paul S. Wilson, a graduate of Candler School of Theology, Emory University and president of the Wilmington District UM Men, has been certified as a men's ministry specialist by the General Commission on UM Men and the Turner Center for Church Development at Vanderbilt Divinity School.

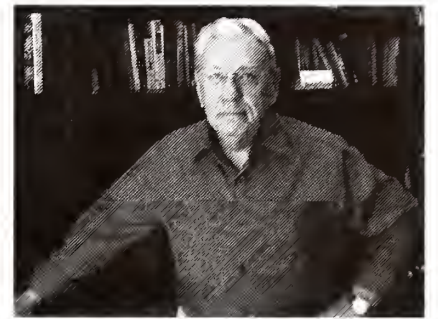
He joins three other men previously certified as men's ministry specialists who are available to help NC Conference churches expand ministries to men. Other volunteer specialists are John Hall, Durham; Charlie Gray, Fuquay Varina, and Allen Shaver, Hillsborough.

While serving as a pastor in the Florida Annual Conference, Wilson doubled the attendance of two churches before becoming the associate pastor of Palm Harbor (Fla.) UMC. That congregation also grew from 1,350 to 1,800 members during the three years he served there.

Wilson then surrendered his credentials after a move to North Carolina where his wife attended Duke Divinity School following her own call to the ordained ministry. "During that time, I felt as though God was leading me in another direction, and I became active in lay leadership positions in the churches my wife has served," said Wilson.

Man in the Mirror

"Quite frankly, I ignored United Methodist Men for many years because I simply did not see them doing all that much of real value," he said. In 2007, that attitude changed when he became acquainted with Orlando, Fla.-based Man in the Mirror ministries. He took men from Knightdale UMC, where his wife was senior pastor, to a No Man Left Behind training event at First UMC in Cary. "All four of us came away tremendously excited at this model



Paul Wilson

of making disciples of men," said Wilson. They began the Iron Knights men's mission group at Knightdale.

The following year he took more men to a similar training event at St. James UMC in Greenville. "By the time I left Knightdale, it was a highly active, spirit-led disciple-growing, mission-oriented men's group," said Wilson. Upon his departure, the Iron Knights established the Paul Wilson Golden Knight Award, and presented him with the first annual award.

Over the last 15 years, Wilson has led multiple groups in the four Disciple Bible Study courses. He has also taught the "Christian Believer" course and short-term Bible studies. He has served as chair of the Stewardship Committee in two churches.

A member of the review committee, Ed Enstine enthusiastically endorsed Wilson as a men's ministry specialist. "As a former pastor and presently a pastor's husband, Paul presents a unique opportunity as a men's ministry specialist in this district and conference....It was apparent from our conversation that he is available and open to being used by clergy and lay to implant and resource men's ministry."

Certification process

Certification for the men's ministry specialist takes 12-18 months. Candidates must participate in a No Man Left Behind Leadership Training experience and a lay speaker course. Candidates must also complete an on-line course in UMC polity and history and a safe-sanctuary course.

Candidates are asked to read "No Man Left Behind" by Man in the Mirror Ministries and Spiritual Fathers by Dan Schaffer.

They write about their spiritual history and complete a spiritual-gifts assessment prior to working with an adviser on a two-year spiritual growth plan.

All candidates are asked to consult with their UM Men conference and district presidents along with their district superintendents in order to prepare a 3-to-5 year strategy to strengthen men's ministry in their areas.

Beginning clergy project taking applications for program

Applications are being taken for the Nov. 11-18 program of the First Parish Project, a support project for beginning clergy funded by the Lilly Endowment and by Hinton Rural Life Center, a mission agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church. First Parish Project is a continuing education program aimed at developing and sustaining effective pastoral leadership in the small membership churches that average 100 or less at the principal weekly worship service. The program is open to clergy of all denominations. Learn more at http://www.hintoncenter.org/html/first_parish_project.html?tr=y&auid=8833560.

New Creation rises *continued from page 1*

had no building of its own and was leasing worship space at Healthy Start Academy, the old Temple Baptist Church building located on West Chapel Hill Street. A major dream for Reconciliation was to build on a 9.6 acre site, a gift to the church, at the corner of Fayetteville Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. But tackling a multi-million dollar building project was not something the relatively small congregation was ready to undertake.

During more than a year and a half of talks, the idea of merger began to move into the realization that making such a move was not just related to need, however, but related to potential, Baker said.

"We found that we could do more, better and bigger things together and that we could move from surviving to thriving," he said.

Morrow, who has been on the job since clergy moving day on June 28, already sees this kind of possibility.

Worship attendance, for example, during the new church's first five Sundays exceeded that of previous attendance at the two churches. On

the second Sunday, New Creation had 155 people in worship.

The new pastor views his assignment to a merged congregation as a challenge, he said, but not something that gave him sleepless nights. After all, 27 years as a military chaplain had acclimated him to dealing with diversity and with different kinds of worship and worshipers.

Already, New Creation is coming together making plans for the fall. One significant event will be participation in the Reconcilers Weekend at Duke Divinity School in September.

One of the leaders, Kit Danley, founder and president of Neighborhood Ministries, an organization serving poor and vulnerable residents in Phoenix for the past 30 years, preaches at New Creation on Sept. 18.

Gloria McAuley, a lay leader and member of Asbury for more than 25 years, is impressed by how smoothly the merger has taken place. Members in general want the new church to succeed, she said. "Many of us feel the merger is God-inspired and this has led to a feeling of hopefulness."

With a congregation composed of

members between 40 and 60 years of age, there has been no programming for youth and children at Asbury. She is hopeful this will change when New Creation does visioning and planning for the future.

"The only drawback I have seen is that we did not have a neutral site to go to," she said. While renovations are under way at Asbury, New Creation will meet at Healthy Start Academy, the site Reconciliation has leased for several years.

Right now, McAuley said, the two congregations are focusing on getting acquainted.

Melissa Rasberry, a member of Reconciliation since 2000, said that she is deeply committed to the idea of reconciling the races and that New Creation—with its commitment to diversity—gives her a feeling of excitement and hopefulness.

"Change is hard," she said. "There is always a transition period and there will be growing pains in the process, but the two churches are committed to a lot of the same things."

One of the contributions Reconciliation will make to the new configuration will be younger couples with growing families [lots of expectant mothers, she said] and a ministry for both children and youth.

She described the new pastor as "a trooper" who has a "huge task ahead of him in getting to know everybody, but he has such a welcoming persona," she said.

On July 3, Morrow's first Sunday, the congregation gave him a standing ovation at the end of his sermon—an unusual occurrence in a United Methodist Church.

The worship style at New Creation,



to put it in a word, is "[United] Methodist," said Morrow. Because of its large Hispanic membership, worship on Sundays is bilingual, a mixture of both Spanish and English, with a translator ensuring everybody understands. Music is what Morrow calls "a cross-section."

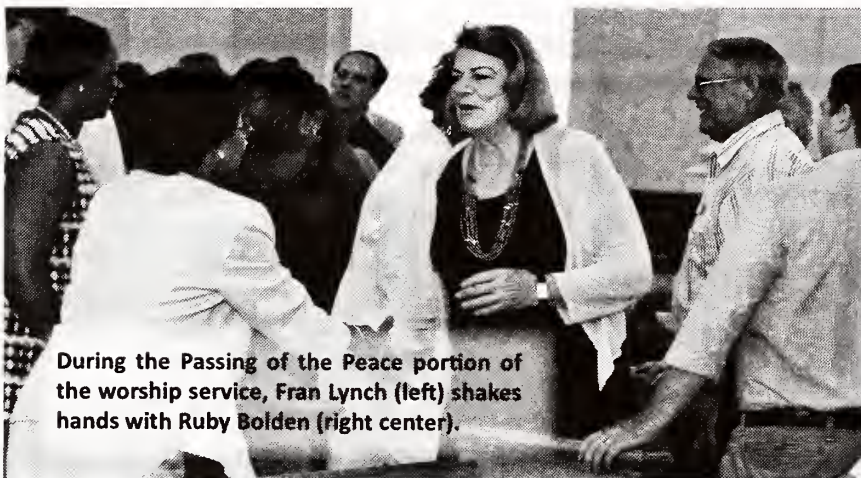
"I have emphasized to the musicians that we make sure a variety of music is used, praise songs to open the service, one Hispanic, one traditional gospel and one contemporary," he said.

The formal part of the service, follows The United Methodist Book of Worship, including the use of traditional hymns and the liturgy of the Great Thanksgiving. Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday.

Renovation at Asbury at 201 S. Alston Ave. has begun, and the leak on the dome has already been repaired. The office for New Creation is located there, and the building is still being used by local ministries.

New Creation's Sunday services are held at 10:30 a.m. at Healthy Start Academy, 807 W. Chapel Hill St. near downtown.

* Flo Johnston, a correspondent for The Durham News, one of the News & Observer's community newspapers, lives in Durham and can be reached by email at flo.johnston314@gmail.com.



During the Passing of the Peace portion of the worship service, Fran Lynch (left) shakes hands with Ruby Bolden (right center).

Virtual Cokesbury Store from the NCC Media Center

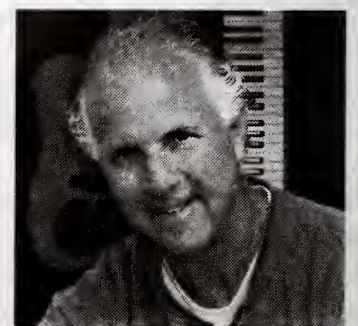
The NC Conference Media Center has set up a virtual Cokesbury store. Purchases made through this link provide a 5% rebate to the Media Center that helps the center provide Christian education resources for local churches.

A link to the virtual store is available on the Media Center's website at <http://nccumc.org/mediacenter/shop-through-our-virtual-cokesbury-store/>.

Also on the website are the online catalog, a variety of electronic resources, subject guides and book reviews.

"Warmth in Winter"

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Swansboro UMC workteam learns generosity through ASP

Youth from the Swansboro UMC had an opportunity to learn generosity during a mission venture to Mullens, WV as part of the Appalachia Service Project (ASP). Each summer since 1969, ASP has brought youth work teams from all over the country to perform home repairs for people in need in the impoverished Appalachia region.

This year's 18 youth and 12 adults from Swansboro were joined in West Virginia by five volunteers from West Hartford, CT and a group of over 40 youth and adults from Cary, all living at the Mullens Middle School for the week.

In all, about 14,000 people will work on 450 homes in 28 counties this year.

Two college students Jordan Barham (Swansboro and UNC-CH) and Jolean Brann (Cedar Point and Meredith College), who had been on several of the church's eight prior ASP missions, headed up ASP groups all summer in Martin County, KY and Morgan County, TN.

The Mullens area has had its share of problems in recent times. Severe flooding, a 10% loss in jobs and population, and the hazards of coal mining are challenges residents face. The population of Wyoming County now has a disability rate of over 30% and housing values are 40% of the national average.

"The amazing thing to me is the spirit of the people," said Roger Fulp, one of the work team leaders from Cape Carteret. "Despite their circumstances, the people have a peace and joy about them and the children are playful and enjoying life."

Fulp, Tom Scholl, and Stella and Roy Staebler from Emerald Isle, demonstrated their generosity by sacrificing a week of work and income in their construction businesses to use their skills repairing homes and teaching youth. Bill Eubanks and Clyde Keagy, both of Swansboro, came out of 'retirement' to lead teams.

"These leaders, along with our other adults, not only taught our youth how to use tools and do extensive home repairs, but they have taught our youth about caring for others while having a good time doing it," said Dave Johnson, who organized the group. "I'd say the key message is that generosity is born out of selfless giving, not abundance. It's not just money. It's also about selflessly giving of your time to play with the children and listen to the families' story and to meet new friends from around the country who shared experiences that you will look back on throughout your life."

The trip was made possible by the generosity of church members and its men's and women's groups who became 'stockholders' in the effort by purchasing 'shares' in the project. Community support came from individuals and groups including the Swansboro Shrine Club and the Bogue House Restaurant.

At the close of the week, Jesse Williams, a rising Swansboro High senior commented, "It really felt good to be able to help people who really needed it; I don't seem to be able to do that very often at home."

That is the spirit of generosity.

At the team commissioning service, members wore their t-shirts depicting this year's theme "Follow the Word – Transform the World" which captured the teamwork of the Swansboro team working with a Jewish group from Connecticut.



ABOVE: Fire damage repairs leave Kristen, Allie and Rachel dirty but smiling.

BELOW: Kelsie, Hannah and Jake work on replacing a roof.



Kirk and Jessica work with the homeowner's daughter to dig a footer.

Audio Visual & Sound Designs

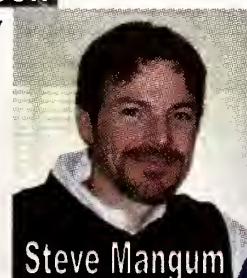
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Horn of Africa Crisis

"We didn't have any real choice. We could have stayed home, but soon we all would have died like the animals."

Habiba Ibrahim Ali (right), 20, a Somali woman who arrived in recent weeks at the Dadaab camp in northeastern Kenya, walks with another woman and their children to a new extension of the world's largest refugee settlement which was originally intended for 90,000 occupants and now has over 400,000.

Families walk across the East African desert on a journey of desperation and hope for weeks, battling hunger, wild animals, and bandits before arriving at the Dadaab refugee complex in northern Kenya. In parts of Somalia, it hasn't rained in over two years, and many families have lost their animals.

"We didn't have any real choice. We could have stayed home, but soon we all would have died like the animals," said one refugee. "By coming to Dadaab, we stay alive, and my daughters can go to school. We'd like to go back home someday, God willing, but it's hard to survive without rain."

Established two decades ago, the Dadaab refugee complex is actually composed of three separate camps. It's been bursting at the seams with more than 1,300 new arrivals every day for several weeks. Long lines of refugees are seeking shelter, food, and other materials needed to survive the hot and dusty environment.



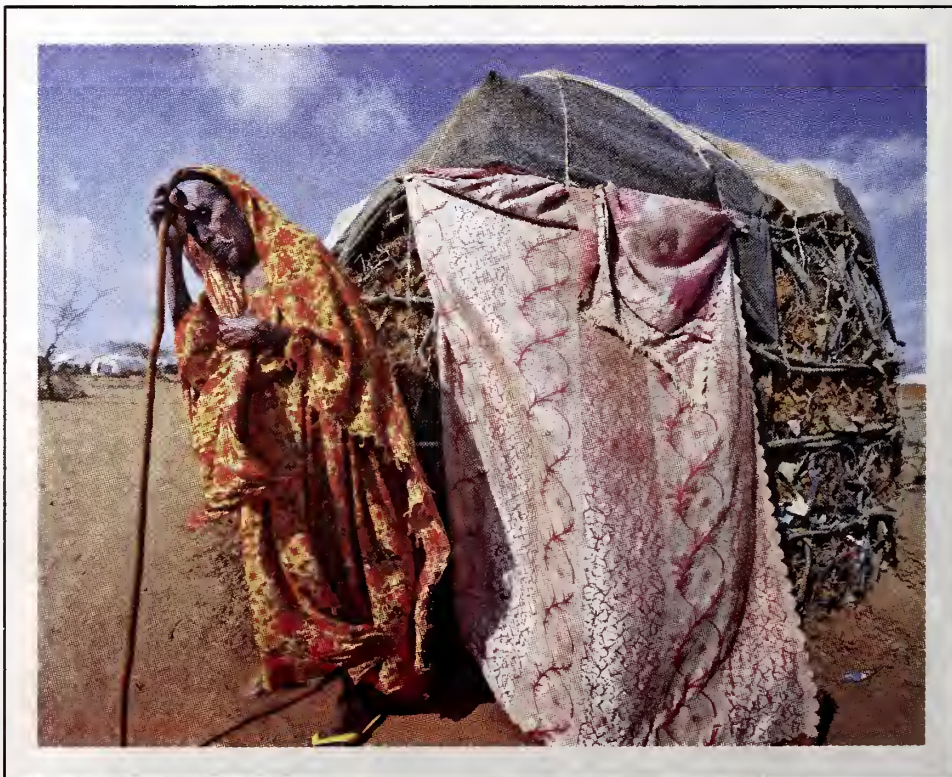
Fatima Hassan Mohammed, an 80-year old Somali woman

who fled drought and war in her country, rests outside her makeshift hut in the bula baqti section of the Dadaab refugee camp in northeastern Kenya. She arrived five months prior, and some other family members who arrived recently helped her make this hut, an improved model over what she had before.

The drought is affecting millions of families throughout the Horn of Africa - Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Although global climate change plays a role, other factors contribute to the suffering. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called the situation a "catastrophic combination of conflict, high food prices and drought."

In Somalia, military conflict and governance issues have made life difficult, and a militant group has prohibited most aid groups from working in its territory. In Ethiopia, stressed pastoralists seeking grazing lands closer to rivers are finding huge swaths of land taken over by foreign agricultural companies, at times to grow bio-fuels.

Global food prices have soared across the region, so although many markets are full, most people can't afford to buy the food they need.



Photos and narrative by the Rev. Paul Jeffrey. Jeffrey is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, documenting the work of the church around the world as senior correspondent for Response, the magazine of United Methodist Women. He also provides coverage of emergencies for Action by Churches Together (the ACT Alliance), a Geneva-based global alliance of churches responding to disasters. Additional text by Linda Bloom, a UMNS multimedia reporter based in New York. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/umcscribe>.



Weary from her long journey, a newly-arrived Somali girl watches through a razor wire fence the activities inside the reception center of the Dagahaley refugee camp, part of the Dadaab refugee complex in northeastern Kenya.

The Dadaab complex is managed by the ACT Alliance, the international network of churches and church agencies responding to emergencies and development challenges. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is a member of the ACT Alliance, and supports the work there, which is carried out by another ACT Alliance member, the Lutheran World Federation. Managing the Dadaab complex means ensuring that the more than two dozen UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations there coordinate their work to avoid overlaps or gaps in service.

UMCOR is supporting partner organizations ACT Alliance, Church World Service, and GlobalMedic in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, with emergency grants to meet immediate food, water, and shelter needs of people displaced by the crisis.

A woman obtains water from a spigot in the Dadaab refugee camp in northeastern Kenya. With thousands of families living on the periphery of the camps, the ACT Alliance is moving families into formal new extensions of two of the camps. Hundreds of tents are being pitched, water services installed, and health care made available.

Besides making sure that needs for shelter, food, medical care, and protection are met, the ACT Alliance coordinates a network of Community Peace and Security Teams composed of refugee men and women who provide self-policing for the camps, often intervening in disputes in the stressful environment before they turn violent.

The ACT Alliance, which assumed management of the complex in 2008, has also introduced democratic elections in which refugees choose their own leaders—assuring refugees a voice in how the camp is run and more quickly resolving the inevitable tensions that arise within such a large, concentrated population, as well as between the refugees and the local host communities.



A Somali refugee child eats while waiting to be registered in the Dadaab refugee camp. The boy's yellow wristband means he has been received but not yet registered.

The level of severe malnutrition in the Horn of Africa worries is high. There are two declared areas of famine in Somalia. "It's heartbreaking, (these) stories of people walking for 25 days, having lost half of their families, having survived by drinking their own urine," aid worker Maurice Bloem told United Methodist News Service. "That's the situation we're talking about."

Church World Service, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, and other members of the faith-based ACT Alliance are coordinating their response to the hunger crisis. A "call for action" report by the Global Nutrition Cluster, a U.N. inter-agency standing committee, showed the prevalence of "global acute malnutrition" among the population of Somalia ranged from 23.8 to 55 percent—an estimate that Bloem, deputy director of Church World Service, said he considered "really alarming."

Problems with food shortages in the Horn of Africa have been building over the years but came to a "critical mass" in recent months, said Melissa Crutchfield, UMCOR executive for international emergency response. "This is not a sudden onset disaster, but it's one that is finally getting the media attention that it needs to generate awareness and the subsequent support," she added.



Africa Crisis: UMCOR Responds

As of July 29, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had appealed for \$2.4 billion from the international community to address the emergency, which is expected to continue for three months or longer.

The World Food Program and UNICEF airlifted hundreds of tons of specialized nutritional food for malnourished children in Somalia. The World Food Program now is feeding more than 1.6 million people in Kenya.

UMCOR partner organizations

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is holding conversations with partner organizations working in the Horn of Africa and planning a regional response to the growing hunger crisis provoked by severe drought in the region. According to the United Nations, today's drought is the worst the region has seen in half a century and has left an estimated 11 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. It has provoked acute malnutrition and death, especially among children and other vulnerable populations.

"UMCOR is very concerned about the escalation of the crisis in the Horn of Africa and is talking with ACT Alliance, Church World Service, GlobalMedic, and Muslim Aid to devise a regional response to it," reported Melissa Crutchfield, UMCOR executive for International Disaster Response.

Somalia, where relief efforts have been hampered by ongoing violence and war, has seen tens of thousands of its weakened citizens flee to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia. The Somali population in three refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya, has increased by more than 30 percent in recent weeks, to 400,000 people. Nearly half the Somali population—3.7 million people—is estimated to be in crisis, the UN said; most—2.8 million—can be found in the war-torn southern part of the country, where the violence has impeded the work of food agencies for more than a year.

If the effects of the drought are not checked, famine could spread to the rest

of southern Somalia within two months, the UN underscored.

"UMCOR is working with our partners to act as quickly and as comprehensively as possible," Crutchfield said. "While we do, we ask for your continued prayers and support for those affected by this crisis."

Long-term interventions and immediate aid

Long-term interventions range from assistance with better agricultural practices and other forms of livelihood to assessing the impact of various factors on global food systems. "You need to ensure that, ultimately, people can better take care of their own needs," he said.

In an interview with CWS's Chris Herlinger, Sammy Matua, based in the agency's East Africa regional office in Nairobi, said his office already is at work helping communities implement adaptive agricultural methods that improve household food security.

UMCOR's board of directors on Aug. 1 approved four grants for \$20,000 each to support:

- ♦ CWS-implemented work in the Mwingi and Kibwezi areas of Kenya, which includes five months of immediate relief measures, such as family food packages and nutritional supplements for young children, and initiatives to improve food security and livelihoods;
- ♦ ACT Alliance members in Ethiopia responding through food distributions and food for work, malaria prevention and capacity building;
- ♦ ACT Alliance members in Somalia providing for a variety of emergency needs – food, shelter, clothing and water – along with long-term assistance to promote agricultural, income-generating activities;
- ♦ GlobalMedic, bringing in water purification tablets to Kenya and Somalia to provide 9.6 million liters of clean drinking water as well as purifier sachets for an additional 1.85 million liters of clean water.

HORN OF AFRICA CRISIS

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

UMCOR is working with partners ACT Alliance, Church World Service, and GlobalMedic in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia to provide food, clean water, and shelter for those who have been displaced and are living in refugee camps because of drought and hunger in the Horn of Africa.

The drought, considered the worst in 50 years, is affecting 11 to 12 million people. Your generous gifts will support UMCOR's current and future efforts there to alleviate suffering for so many.

International Disaster Response,
"Horn of Africa"
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HOW TO GIVE

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By Offering: For local church and annual conference credit, put your gift in the offering plate on Sunday and indicate Horn of Africa, Advance #982450

By Check: Make your check to UMCOR and mail to: UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087

By Credit Card: Call toll-free (800) 554-8583

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Habiba Nuno, 25, with one of her children as she pauses to rest while trekking across eastern Kenya near the Somali border. The Somali woman left her home a month earlier, fleeing drought and conflict, and heading to the Dadaab refugee complex. Already the world's largest refugee settlement, Dadaab has swelled in recent weeks with tens of thousands of recent arrivals from Somalia.

PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY/ACT ALLIANCE

Since there will never cease to be some in need on the Earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.'

Deuteronomy 15

Gleaning: Neighbors helping neighbors



In the Bible, farmers were instructed not to harvest all of the food in their fields, but to leave some for poor people and travelers. Today, farmers usually don't harvest imperfect or fully-ripe fruits or vegetables that won't store, package, ship or sell. Mechanical harvesters only take crops of a certain size or shape. The fruits and vegetables that are not harvested would rot in the field. Gleaning involves gathering leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been harvested.

This bounty is gathered to be used by organizations like the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA), a Christian ministry which feeds the hungry in 21 states. Most gleaning events take place on weekends where gleaners arrive in the fields early and finish by noon. Society of St. Andrew makes all arrangements with farmers, produce containers and food distribution. Volunteer groups are encouraged to take food back to agencies or programs that they support in their local area. People of all ages can glean.

ABOVE TWO PHOTOS: In June, 12 gleaners from New Hope UMC, in Hertford, worked alongside members from Edenton UMC, Hertford UMC, Immanuel Baptist Church, and the Open Door of Perquimans to glean 2,600 pounds of potatoes from a local farmer's field in northwestern Pasquotank County. The fresh produce was distributed to families served by the Food Bank of the Albemarle, the New Hope UMC Food Pantry, the Open Door of Perquimans, Edenton Chowan Food Pantry, and various churches located in northern Pasquotank County.



In late June, a team of 27 children, youth and adults from Swansboro UMC joined more than a hundred others from six area churches in gleaning 15 acres of sweet corn at the Tip Top Farm near Rose Hill. They picked enough corn to completely fill the back of a pick-up truck. The corn was brought to the Swansboro Rotary Club for the monthly free food distribution to the needy in the area. The gleaning was sponsored by the Society of Saint Andrew and Swansboro UMC's local hunger-emphasis, called "Manna."

For more information

on gleaning, visit SoSA's website at <http://www.endhunger.org/north-carolina.htm>. For details of the SoSA farmer's market initiative, see page 15.

Manna was organized a year ago after church members participated in a hunger awareness seminar in Washington, DC, sponsored by the denomination's Board of Church and Society. Through Manna, the congregation has grown more aware of hunger issues in the Swansboro area: holding monthly food drives; sponsoring worship, a potluck dinner and film; holding a demonstration by local chefs; and highlighting local seafood and farm production at the church's EnviroFair in May. This fall, Manna will help organize a "Stop Hunger Now" event in the community.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

October 2, 2011

Text: Proverbs 29:16-27
"An Ordered Life"

Have you ever talked with someone who listens to what you are saying, but then always counters your view by answering, "Yes, but..."?

These verses from Proverbs have that feel. It is a precursor of Jesus' words: "You have heard it said of old, but I say unto you..."

The first part of most of these verses offers one point of view and then the writer (Solomon?) punches back with an alternative attitude. For example, look at Proverbs 29:23: "A person's pride will bring humiliation, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor."

In other places, students will find discussion of the meaning and implications of these texts.

In this study, let's think about how believers are called upon to think like this: "I hear what you are saying, but let me offer another way of thinking and doing."

The Christian is called to be countercultural. The Christian lives in but

not of the world. The Christian takes seriously and relates to the culture in which he or she lives, but finds the signals and values for living in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Christian is, as we sometimes say, walking to another drumbeat.

At Bethany Church in Durham, we had a consultant who came to coach the congregation in some long-range planning.

She suggested that after hearing another member speak, we should avoid saying "Yes, but..." and should continue the conversation by saying, "Yes, and..." That was a helpful tool for building listening and respect into the discussion.

Whether we offer "Yes, but..." or whether we offer "Yes, and...", it is important that we in the faith community keep the conversation going.

We dare not let the prevailing culture determine what is "meet, right, and our bounden duty."

Sometimes, however, the culture leads the Church in a good way when the Church is slow to lead.

(For example, women won the right to vote in 1920, but were not ordained in The Methodist Church until 1956.)

People of faith need to listen to culture, talk with the culture, learn from the culture, and finally test the culture by Jesus Christ.

These verses in Proverbs offer a

reminder to have that conversation.

What Someone Else Has Said

In *Christian Identity and Religious Pluralism* (Abingdon Press), Michael Barnes has written: "Dialogue is not just a more civilized form of mission; it is about learning who the other is in order to find out who I am."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Move with me, O God, that I do not go alone into this conversation with the world..."

October 9, 2011

Text: Ecclesiastes 9:13-18
"The Superiority of Wisdom"

This week's study text leaves me feeling gloomy. The story unfolds about a man who was wise, but who was so poor as to be overlooked (Ecclesiastes 9:14-16).

Translations differ in how they render the account: either the man was wise enough that he could have saved the city but no one paid him any attention or the man's wisdom did indeed save the city but no one gave him any credit. Neither angle gives much delight! Then the passage ends with the how-well-we-know-it truth that one person can mess up even great wisdom (Ecclesiastes 9:18). Feeling better yet?

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* series.

Even though there are four or five Hebrew words that are often translated as "wisdom," in Ecclesiastes, only one such word is used: *chokmâh*. It carries with it the implication of being wise in mind, word, or act.

That is a helpful way of understanding "wisdom at its best." Some persons are able to think wisely, but do not know how to share it with others. Some persons can talk a good game but do not know how to implement what they are saying. Wisdom in its best sense combines wise thought, wise word, and wise deed.

The writer of Ecclesiastes is sometimes called "a royal philosopher." The author of these chapters is familiar with places of power, places of prestige. (Look at Ecclesiastes 1:1.)

This is someone who knows the ways of war (9:18). This is someone who knows what it is to be overwhelmed by an enemy (9:14).

This is someone who knows what it is like to order around "his majesty's subjects" (9:17). This is, as we might say today, someone who has been around the block a few times. Yet, in spite of all that worldly experience, the writer says there is something better than war, fear, or power.

It is wisdom, even wisdom hidden away in someone thought by society to be insignificant.

I find myself wondering who might be the quietly wise ones in our day. A political leader who sets aside bellicose options? A modest monk who daily prays for our national enemies?

A teacher who helps a child move beyond a dysfunctional family history? A friend who is simply "there" for another? An economist who measures money matters by "the least of these"?

A youth who refuses to join in teasing a classmate who is "different"? A soldier who values freedom more than his life? As Jesus said, "Think on these things."

What Someone Else Has Said

Helmut Thielicke has written (*Encounter with Spurgeon*, Fortress Press) "...knowledge may be dangerous if unaccompanied with wisdom, which is the art of rightly using what we know."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Source of all wisdom, break open the hard places of my heart, the closed places of my mind, the cowardly places of my deeds..."

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, all 12 volumes, in excellent condition, \$100.00. Call Bob Carpenter at (910) 997-1962.

HOLDEN BEACH Ocean Front Condo - Pray, meditate and enjoy the beautiful view of the ocean from the covered porch of this two bedroom two bath condo (WiFi provided). Pastors and others in ministry receive a special off-season rate of \$425 per week (\$150 savings) from November through March. Contact Hobbs Realty (800) 655-3367 and refer to this ad to reserve "Our Beach Blessing" (Sea Oats Villas #106).

MUSIC DIRECTOR wanted part-time. An individual with drive and enthusiasm to lead, inspire, and continue to develop a well-established and supportive volunteer SATB choir. Must have excellent communication and

personal relationship skills in order to collaborate effectively with a wide range of musical groups and individuals. Resume should include academic and professional training, previous positions held, and references. Send resume to SPRC Chairman, 1407 S. Tarboro St., Wilson, NC 27893.

FOR SALE BY OWNER: 3,400 Square Foot Two Story, Brick Lake Front Home at Lake Junaluska Assembly. Four bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, 2 great rooms and fireplaces, new hardwood floors, 2 kitchens one recently installed. Use as 2 separate units or one large home. To view upstairs and exterior go to www.maggiievacations.com and click on Pops Porch. Contact Sherrill Sykes at hmsykes@atmc.net.

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night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom townhouse, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs! Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccumc.org

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EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.

See "Bible Study," page 16

around the CONFERENCE



Kids make a difference at St. Paul's, Burlington

On Saturday, July 16, St. Paul's UMC in Burlington held its first Kids Make A Difference! Day. The children gathered to learn stories of how children in the Bible made a difference in the lives of others, enjoy fun and games, share lunch and snacks, and engage in making a difference in the lives of others. With the help of the youth and adult staff, these children packed 114 school kits and 110 health kits. Nine children, aged 2-10 attended this first-time event.

Haw River UMC sponsors school supply giveaway

Some of the members of Haw River UMC (Burlington District), including the pastor, the Rev. Jeanne Neal, who participated in the 2nd annual School Supply Giveaway Mission on July 30 are shown with some of the 400 assembled tote bags. Each bag was filled with Preschool supplies for children in the community. Parents as far away as Virginia brought their children to the event where 320 bags were given away. The rest of the bags were donated for use as needed in Haw River Elementary School.



Raleigh District clergy families go 'Bowling for the Kids'

The first-ever "Bowling For The Kids" clergy family day was a big success with a great turnout and a wonderful result, according to Raleigh District Superintendent Jon Strother. Through this day, the Raleigh District was able to be a sponsor of the Methodist Home for Children 1K - 1 Kid program. The program is an initiative of the Home that enables groups or individuals to complete the care for one child for one year. Contributions help clothe and feed children in the ministries' group homes, counsel families in crisis, find homes for children with MHC's foster families, and serve children affected by substance abuse. To start a 1K for 1Kid campaign, contact Jennifer Cooper at jcooper@mhfc.org or 1.888.305.4321 ext. 305.



Clergy Partners meet, elect officers

The North Carolina Conference Clergy Partners Association held its Annual Luncheon during 2011 North Carolina Conference. The group elected new officers for 2011-2012. Shown on the front row are Joan Bisogno-secretary, Sarah Alexander-nominations, Annette Wright-president, Tanya Edwards-Day Apart registrar and Jimmie Shuler-newsletter editor. Back row- Henry Swett- nominations chairperson, Jeanie Neuschaefer-nominations, Joyce Gwinn-wife of Bishop Al Gwinn and a speaker at the gathering, Betsy Mills-luncheon coordinator, Kim Smith-president ex-officio and outreach coordinator, and Angela Mitchell- nominations. Not shown are Tammy Thornton-day apart coordinator, Doris Brunson-historian, Gail Daniel and Kathryn Collins-nominations and Mary Anne Brown-treasurer.

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving workshop - Sept. 26-27

Pastors, church financial leaders, and stewardship leaders are encouraged to participate in one of two stewardship workshops to be held in September. Leaders will include persons from the General Board of Discipleship and will feature the new funding program, "Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving" by Michael Reeves, Jennifer Tyler, and Bishop Robert Schnase. Pick the time and place that is most convenient: Monday, Sept. 26 (1 - 6:00 p.m.) at St. James UMC: Greenville or Tuesday, Sept. 27 (1 - 6:00 p.m.) at St. Luke UMC: Sanford. To register, call Katherine Wilder at 919-779-6115 or email kwilder@nccumc.org. A \$10 registration fee is required to help offset the costs of materials and speakers.

Methodist Days at Kings Dominion in September, October support YSF

Discount tickets for Kings Dominion are available to NC Conference United Methodist Church groups for September 1,2,3,4,5,10,11; and October 1,2,8,9,15,16,22,23, and 29. In addition to the savings in admission price of \$28+, a rebate of \$1.00 is offered to Youth Service Fund for each regular ticket redeemed. The flyer with information on how to purchase tickets online or by phone can be found at nccumc.org/youth.

Stewardship in the African-American Church - Sept. 29-Oct. 1

The "How to Raise All the Money Your Church Needs," event will bring together African-American pastors and church leaders to explore effective stewardship development with some of the most effective leaders in stewardship development in The United Methodist Church. Come to Lake Junaluska and discover new insights and ideas that can be taken back to the local church and used to strengthen the ministries of the church. For more information, go to www.lakejunaluska.com/african-american-stewardship

Associate Members, Local Pastors, and Lay Speakers gathering -Oct. 1

Dr. Terry Teykl will lead us in a Prayer Encounter Seminar on Saturday, Oct 1st, 9:00 am - 2:30 pm at Garner UMC in Garner. We'll enjoy an uplifting day experiencing the humor and passion of Dr. Teykl as he leads us in this seminar. He has written several books including, Pray the Price, Blueprint for the House of Prayer, Acts 29, Prayed On or Prayed For, and How to Pray After You've Kicked the Dog. His website, where you'll find more information, is www.renewalministries.com. For more information and to RSVP for lunch (cost is \$5), contact Margaret Hockett at mhockett@nccumc.org, or call 910-791-4092.

Safe Sanctuaries training for clergy coming in October

The Safe Sanctuaries Team of the North Carolina Conference is providing training for all UM clergy in October. Keeping safe the children and youth of our congregations is a priority for every local church. Knowing how to do that effectively is a matter of concern, especially for directors of preschools and youth ministries. Even in smaller congregations where volunteers teach Sunday School and accompany the youth on a retreat, policies and procedures are essential for the protection and safety of those under the age of 18 and also for the volunteer and employed staff who work with them.

Four Safe Sanctuaries training events are scheduled, and clergy may choose the one most convenient in terms of date or location. The content of every workshop is the same and each meets from 9am-12noon. The dates are: Oct. 3 - Haymount UMC in Fayetteville, Oct. 17 - Covenant UMC in Greenville, Oct. 22 - Millbrook UMC, Raleigh (make-up date), and Oct. 31 - Methodist Building in Garner from 9 a.m.-12 noon. Register online at <http://nccumc.org/safe-sanctuaries-training-for-clergy/>.

The Trail of Hope: The Power of Native American Women - Oct. 7-9

SEJANAM and Lake Junaluska will host the second Native Women's Gathering and Conference Oct. 7-9. The conference will focus on capacity building, sharing strategies, and tapping into the leadership capabilities of Native American women to strengthen their communities and churches. Come and hear the hopeful stories of women who have impacted their communities for the greater good. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.lake-junaluska.com/native-american-women/> or call 828-454-6656.

Convocation & Pastors' School at Duke Divinity School - Oct. 10-11

The 2011 Convocation & Pastors' School - Oct. 10-11 at Duke Divinity School. Learn more and register visit, <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/lifelong-learning/cps-2011>.

GBOD to sponsor Wesleyan Leadership Conference - Oct. 13-15

The second annual Wesleyan Leadership Conference, which will bring together people who want to be more missional in their ministry like the original Methodist movement, is scheduled for Oct.13-15 in Nashville. Speakers will include the Rev. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan leadership at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship; and the Rev. Elaine Heath, the McCreless assistant professor of evangelism at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. For registration information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/wesleyan-leadership>.

Laity session of Christian Witness Academy to be held Oct. 20-22

Registration is open for the 2011 Academy of Christian Witness lay session, Oct. 20-22 at Camp Rockfish. A main emphasis of the session will be to teach practical tools for evangelism use in communities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Advance registration is required. The registration fee is \$25 and enrollment is on a first come - first served basis. For further information, call the Rev. Carol Dean, chair of the Evangelism Committee, at 910-567-6116 or email her at caroldean@nccumc.org.

Bishop Gwinn to lead trip to Holy Land in January 2012

Travel with Bishop Al Gwinn as he leads a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 2012. Depart on Jan. 25 and visit all the holy sites, worship together, experience the teachings of Bishop Gwinn, and walk where Jesus walked. This will be the last opportunity to travel with Bishop Gwinn as the episcopal leader of the NC Conference. Call Harold Salmon, Conference Director of Tour Ministries at 919-377-2950 or go to <http://nccumc.org/bishop/2012-holy-land-trip/> for more information.

Initiative connects fresh food with area food pantries

The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) invites United Methodist congregations to take part in SoSA's Farmers Market Initiative pairing volunteers from congregations with farmers markets in their area to collect fresh, nutritious produce for those in need. For the program:

- ◆ UMC volunteers are provided with a booth and promotional materials from SoSA.
- ◆ SoSA will contact a nearby farmers market to request space, as well as contacting a nearby feeding agency as a drop-off point.
- ◆ UMC volunteers staff the booth at the farmers market, request produce donations from market patrons, and collect donations from the market farmers who may have excess at the end of the day.
- ◆ UMC volunteers collect the produce, record the amounts, and deliver that produce to the selected agency.

Since 1979, SoSA has collected and distributed fruit and vegetables to people with limited access to fresh produce. SoSA has relied on close ties with the United Methodist Church for financial and volunteer support. To register for SoSA's Farmers Market Initiative, please email Kate Patison at sosanc@endhunger.org, or call (919) 683-3011.



Leonard Sweet is featured speaker at Camp & Retreat Ministries dinner

On Oct. 1, NC United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries is hosting a dinner fundraiser "An Evening with Leonard Sweet and Campfire Dreams." Dr. Sweet is the keynote speaker for the evening.

A professor, author, and speaker, Sweet has published over 1000 sermons and many books and has been named "one of the most influential Christians." Bishop Al Gwinn will share the invocation, and various camping ministry staff and alumni will share stories of their life-changing moments at camp. A dinner will be served to the rhythm of live steel drums, followed later by live auction.

The event is being held at the North Raleigh Hilton starting at 6 p.m. The goal is to raise funds supporting "Campfire Dreams" of expanded programming, enhanced facilities and more opportunities to send children to camp through the Campership scholarship fund. Already secured for the auction are vacation packages to the Caribbean, Ocean Isle Beach and Lake Junaluska. Among many other items is a restaurant-hotel-theater package for the musical, *Evita*. More information about the event, online donations, and ticket purchases is available at www.ncumcamps.org.

General Conference petitions accepted through Sept. 27

Petitions for consideration by the 2012 General Conference may be submitted to the Petitions Secretary through September 27, 2011. According to church law, "Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference"

Detailed instructions for submitting a petition are available on the General Conference website at gc2012.umc.org. Submit petitions via e-mail to petitions@umpublishing.org or through the website. The deadline has passed for petitions submitted through U.S.P.S mail or by fax.

Eligible petitions are assigned to one of 13 legislative committees or the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Committees debate the proposals and determine whether to approve, amend, combine or reject them for recommendation to the full body of General Conference. Questions about petition submissions may be submitted by e-mail to Gary Graves, Petitions Secretary, at petitionsquestions@umpublishing.org.

Youth, young people's ministry video examples sought

Examples of the many voices and diverse ministries of United Methodist young people are being requested by the Young People's Ministries division of the General Board of Discipleship to be featured at the 2012 General Conference. One-minute videos or pictures with narration are due by Oct. 31, 2011, to be considered for inclusion in the address. Submission guidelines for both are posted online at <http://globalyoungpeople.org/ympaddress>.

Conference clergy directory now available for online download

The Conference Clergy Directory is available for download from the conference website, nccumc.org, and will not be printed and mailed this year, Conference Secretary Jerry Bryan has announced. A PDF file can be downloaded for viewing or printing from the website by selecting the "Publications" listing under "Resources" or from the Conference Secretary's office listing under "Ministries."

"When the book was printed, it was as accurate as possible," Bryan said, "but shortly after it was mailed,

some of the information became out-of-date." By being on the Conference Website, the publication will be more accurate since adjustments can be made quickly.

Printing and mailing over 2300 directories costs almost \$11,000 per year. That amount can be used to offset adjustments needed in other budget items and possibly can help reduce the entire budget, Bryan said.

Updates to the PDF will be made periodically and posted with the changes highlighted in yellow.

2011 Peace Conference focuses on poverty; scholarships are available for students

The 2011 Peace Conference, "Poverty, Abundance, and Peace: Seeking Economic Justice for All God's Children" explores world economic systems and how they impact peace, poverty and hunger. For information on the Peace Conference and to register, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.

The gathering features Senator and former presidential candidate George McGovern; David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; and Bishop Nkula Ntambo of the Katanga Conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The conference will be held Nov. 13-15.

The Conference will also feature an interfaith panel featuring Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars on the topic, "Our Sacred Texts Speak to Us in Regard to Peace, Justice and Economics."

United Methodist Foundations across the country have joined together to offer scholarships for full-time college or seminary students to attend the 2011 conference. Deadline to apply is Oct. 1. Visit <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace-scholarships/> for details.

conference CALENDAR

September

- 11 Legacy Sunday
- 14 Written work for Call Retreat Due
- 20 Leading an Externally-Focused Church, Bishop's Day Apart, Nashville UMC, Nashville, 9:30 a.m.
- 26 NCC Workshop on Annual Funding and Extravagant Generosity, 1 - 6:00 p.m., St. James UMC: Greenville
- 27 NCC Workshop on Annual Funding and Extravagant Generosity, 1 - 6:00 p.m., St. Luke UMC: Sanford
- 30 - Oct 2 Dads, Lads and Gals camp, Camp Rockfish

October

- 1 Gathering of Associate Members, Local Pastors, and Lay Speakers with Terry Tekyl, 9:00 a.m., Garner UMC
- NC UM Camp & Retreat - Sweet Dreams Fundraising Dinner, North Raleigh Hilton, 6:00 p.m.
- 2 World Communion Sunday
- 7-9 Boy Scout weekend, Camp Rockfish
- 10 - 11 2011 Convocation & Pastors' School, Duke Divinity School

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

October Adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

October 16, 2011

Text: Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:7, 13
"Wisdom for Aging"

Although I had a birthday less than a month ago (I was born on the same day as the first nighttime outdoor rodeo with electric lights—leastways, that's what Wikipedia says), I was feeling pretty good before reading this week's biblical material.

Then, I saw that the Teacher who wrote Ecclesiastes contrasted youth and old age. Let's put it this way: old age didn't win that competition.

The picture of old age is not a pretty one: big, strong men now limp about (12:3); women who used to enjoy the scenery can now barely see (12:3); old people cannot sleep at night (12:4); the lovely sounds of nature are hardly audible (12:4); age makes one constantly afraid of falling (12:5); the elderly are afraid to go out alone (12:5); the funeral homes are packed (12:5); desire becomes a thing only of memory (12:5)...and all that is the good news. Then, we stop breathing and turn to dust (12:7). Oh, well.

But now, in reflection, I find good news in these verses. In the face of those who say that believers should withdraw from the world's flow, Ecclesiastes teaches "Live life with all you've got!"

In the face of those who, in the famous description of "the Puritans' fear that somebody somewhere was having a good time," Ecclesiastes teaches life is intended for enjoyment.

In the face of the adversaries of aging, Ecclesiastes teaches "throw whatever punch you've got."

There seems to be a kind of cynicism in some of these verses: youth is good; old is bad.

The Teacher's advice to the young is "Enjoy it while you can." But then, the Teacher (or a later editor speaking for the Teacher) says that the bottom line is keeping the will (the commandments) of the awesome (to

be feared) God—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

That is the constant for young and for old. That is the standard by which young and old will be measured (12:14).

In the end, it is not about our ability to perform; it is about our willingness to be faithful with whatever we have and whatever we can do at any stage of life.

What Someone Else Has Said

These quotations come from Jimmy Carter's book *The Virtues of Aging* (Library of Contemporary Thought): "Anybody who can still do at sixty what he was doing at twenty wasn't doing much at twenty." "When you're pushing seventy, that's exercise enough." "You are old when regrets take the place of dreams." "... There are two crucial factors in how happy or successful an older person is: (1) having a purpose in life, and (2) maintaining quality relationships with others."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of this and every age, I give You thanks for journeys over and journeys to come. I confess that I do not always like the way I am but I am grateful for Your love that is constant..."

October 23, 2011

Text: Song of Solomon 4:8-5:1a
"Tradition and Love"

When students of the Bible come across the Song of Solomon (the Hebrew title is Song of Songs), they usually fall into one of two camps: (1) this is collection of erotic love poems or (2) this is a collection of metaphors about God's love for Israel.

Either point of view is something to celebrate: either the point is that God blesses the intimacy of human relationships or the point is that God has a beautiful love for Israel. Or both.

Some of the images of the Song of Solomon show up in other places in the Scripture.

The Song of Solomon (4:9) gives a metaphor of a husband's love for his wife. Compare Isaiah 54:5 in which Israel is told that "Your Maker is your

husband."

In Song of Solomon 4:11, the lover rejoices in the sweet smell of the clothes worn by his bride, reminding him of the gentle scents of Lebanon.

In Hosea 14:6-7, God tells Israel through the prophet that Israel shall, under God's care, have the fragrance of Lebanon, "their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon."

In Song of Solomon 4:12, the poet describes his bride as "a garden locked", or as the King James Version translates, "a garden enclosed." In Isaiah 58:11, Israel is depicted as a watered garden where there are always enough springs to nourish all the plants.

In Song of Solomon 4:16, the beloved is invited to come and enjoy the finest fruits of love. In Galatians 5:22, the apostle Paul spells out the fruit that comes from a life in the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Of course, the frequent images of "garden" in the Song of Solomon echo the story of how humankind messed up the first garden in Eden. Adam and Eve sinned and destroyed the perfect love of God's created garden. Now, in Song of Solomon comes a picture of a garden restored where love again reigns (4:12, 4:15-16; 5:1; 6:2, 11).

You have got to like this biblical reminder of love!

What Someone Else Has Said

Gerhard Ebeling (*The Nature of Faith*, Fortress Press) has written: "... on this basis of faith as being loved comes liberation from self-love. He who is loved by God no longer needs to love himself...He is therefore free to love his neighbor."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of all love, Giver of all love, help us to accept the fullness of the grace You give us. Help us to move beyond word to deed, beyond thought to practice, beyond expectation to experience..."

October 30, 2011

Text: Matthew 5:1-12
"Living as God's People"

One of the doctrinal standards for The United Methodist Church is the Standard Sermons of John Wesley. Thirteen of those sermons are based on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

Kenneth C. Kinghorn describes these sermons as "John Wesley's most thorough exposition of Christian ethics." Further, Dr. Kinghorn

says that the fifth chapter of Matthew (this week's study text covers the first twelve verses, the Beatitudes) "deals with how our attitudes affect all aspects of life."

This lesson falls on Reformation Sunday, a time when many Christians remember the shaping influence of Martin Luther.

The reformer challenged the Church to recognize the authority of Scripture and to accept that justification was by faith alone and to acknowledge that grace alone was sufficient.

These are, Luther taught, basics for the Christian journey.

How do the Beatitudes "talk" with the Protestant Reformation?

Perhaps it is like this: the same way that "faith" and "works" always talk to each other.

Charles Wesley wrote: "Let us plead for faith alone, faith which by our works is shown."

The Beatitudes give us a hint of what the works that grow from faith look like: poverty in spirit (v.3), sadness at sin (v. 4), meekness (v. 5), righteousness (v. 6), merciful (v. 7), purity (v. 8), peacemaking (v. 9), and persecution (v. 10).

Jesus said that those who have these qualities are "blessed."

Who does not want to be blessed... but who wants all these characteristics? Is a blessing worth getting persecuted? Is a blessing worth choosing peace over revenge? Is a blessing worth being pure when a little impurity seems like more fun?

What Jesus is teaching in Matthew 5:1-12 is what faith looks like "on the ground." When we see these blessings in a life, we are seeing the harvest of a faith well lived.

What Someone Else Has Said

In *John Wesley's Life and Ethics* (Abingdon Press), Ronald H. Stone has said: "The Sermon on the Mount was, for Wesley, the guide to practical Christian living. It had more social implications than either Wesley's Moravian mentors or Lutheran fore-runners in the faith would admit.... Wesley, trusting more in the transforming power of love, stressed the Sermon on the Mount."

Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Have Thine own way, Lord. We give You thanks for showing us how love is to be lived. We confess that our choices sometimes turn us away from these blessings. Restore us to the fullness of our love for You and for our neighbor. Open our lives to the voice of our Lord who has taught us in word and in deed. Have Thine own way, Lord..."

BIRTHS

Cameron Wesley Wittman, son of Nathan (Burlington: Fairview) and Laura Wittman, was born July 12.

Henry Patterson Ledford, son of Laura Fine Ledford (Associate Director, Ministerial Relations Office) and husband, Rodney, was born July 14.

DEATH

DAVIS, Jefferson W., (Sanford: retired) died July 18. A celebration of life was held July 20 at Jonesboro UMC.

Central UMC, in East Laurinburg, celebrates 100th anniversary and looks to the future



Outreach Committee Chair Janelle Rhye presented a special centennial recognition to honor Emma Neal Maddox who has been a faithful and active church member for 84 years and was 92 years young on Nov. 5, 2010.

By Katherine Evans *

Central UMC of East Laurinburg celebrated their one-hundredth birthday on March 6 with approximately 140 present.

Honored attendees included three former pastors and their wives, the Rev. H. Warren Casiday, the Rev. Robert H. Ray, and the Rev. William M. Wells, Jr., and Rockingham District Superintendent Leonard E. Fairley. The Rev. Quinton Covington, a former pastor, was unable to attend due to illness.

A recall of the church's history was presented along with a challenge for the future pressing onward in the upward calling of the church.

As part the history presentation,

an altar of stones was built with the names of Jesus and the 34 charter members written on the stones.

As part of the congregation's focus on the future, stones with all in attendance were added to the altar as a sign of the members' commitment.

Sponsored by efforts from the Outreach Committee, the Nurture Committee, and the youth, the congregation brought 62 bags of non-perishable food for the local Church Community Center.

The youth also received an offering of \$331 to purchase goats for struggling families in Haiti supporting an ongoing youth project which will continue throughout the centennial year.

Outreach Committee Chairperson Janelle Rhye presented a special centennial recognition to honor Miss Emma Neal Maddox who has been a faithful and active church member for 84 years and was 92 years young on Nov. 5, 2010.

Special music was presented by the adult and the children's choirs under the direction Phyllis Clark and Margie Dean.

Darrell Bridger, soloist, sang, "O God our help in ages past" to reflect the church's foundation in God both in the past and in the future.

Centennial Chair Ann Stewart said, "I was very pleased with all the hard work that was done by everyone to make this a successful and enjoyable day."

* Katherine Evans serves as church historian at Central UMC.

Faith surges after fire at Union Chapel, newly built sanctuary is completed

By Sloane Heffernan *

Members of a historic Kittrell church gave thanks Aug. 14 for the new sanctuary they built with \$1.2 million, two years' time and a whole lot of faith.

In August 2007, fire destroyed the sanctuary at the 175-year-old Union Chapel UMC, at 6479 Raleigh Road. Congregational leader Tony Sanford watched as the church where he was baptized, got married and worshipped every Sunday burned to the ground. "It was just like you lost your brother or sister. It was terrible," Sanford said.

Insurance only covered about half of what the congregation needed to rebuild. "The first thing people said was, 'How are we going to rebuild? We can't afford it,'" Sanford said.

Churchgoers raised about \$650,000 and people from across the country came forward with substan-



Worship at Union Chapel UMC was held in the new sanctuary on Aug. 14.

tial donations when they heard about the fire, church leaders said.

The congregation's oldest member, Mary Lee Crocker, said the fire and its aftermath made the Union Chapel community stronger than ever.

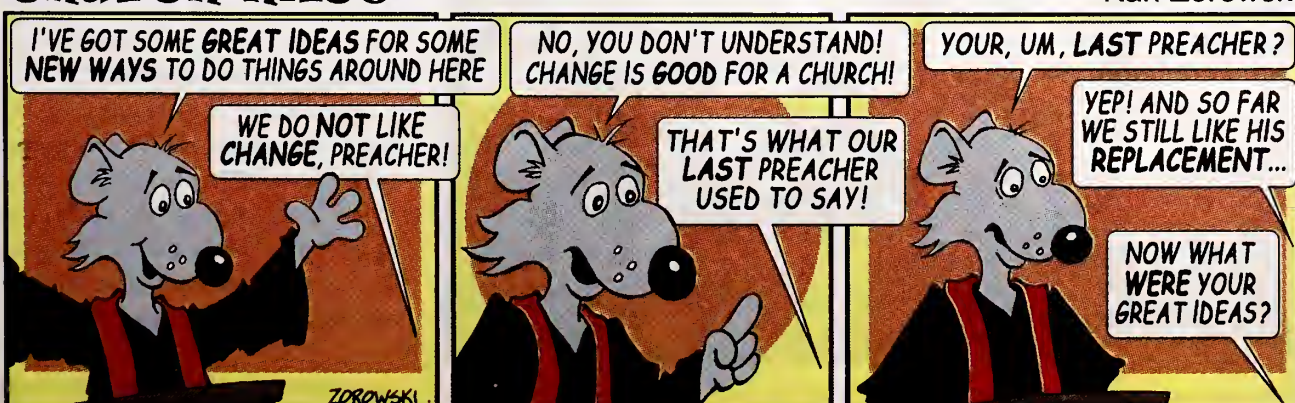
"I think it made members pull together. I think it united the church in a way," Crocker said.

Church leaders say the fire, which was battled by more than 70 firefighters from Vance and Franklin counties, was sparked by a lightning strike.

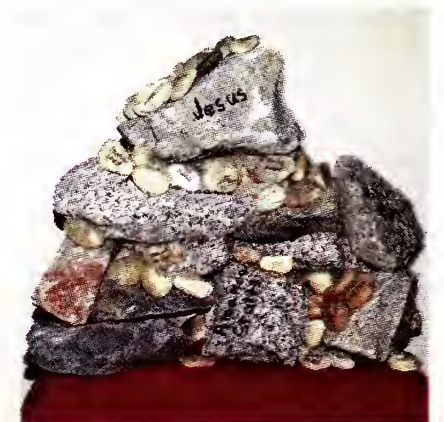
* Sloane Heffernan is a reporter with WRAL News (WRAL-TV) in Raleigh. The article appeared on WRAL-TV and WRAL.COM. Used by permission.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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As part of Central UMC's centennial history presentation, an altar of stones was built with Jesus' name and the names of the 34 charter members written on the stones.

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New Hope UMC steps back in time to 12 A.D. Nazareth for VBS

By Patricia Walker Murphy *

This year the Vacation Bible School (VBS) theme at New Hope UMC in Hertford was "Hometown Nazareth - Where Jesus Was A Kid." A total of 49 children attended, and approximately 30 helpers made the program possible.

The children and adults traveled back in time over 2,000 years ago to the dusty town of Nazareth where Jesus lived and was raised by his parents. Activities were designed to help the children see, hear, touch and taste what it was like to live during Jesus' time.

They explored a marketplace; visited Mary, Jesus' mom and heard about Jesus' childhood adventures; danced to lively Bible songs; collected Bible memory makers to remind them of God's Word and looked for evidence of God all around them.

"Hometown Nazareth was really well put together and very well run. I love the family concept and the way the evenings were scheduled," said the Rev. Ed Rutenkroger, pastor of New Hope UMC.

"VBS provided us with the opportunity to interact with families we never see. We have a follow-up plan for all of the children that attended VBS," he added. Each child was given a bag with a Bible, information about the church, and an invitation to attend services.

Gracie, one of the children attending VBS said, "I really had a lot of fun. I liked visiting with Mary because she taught us a lot of things about Jesus. I learned that nothing is impossible with God. I want to come back next year." Her younger sister Rubie added, "I just liked everything. It was lots of fun! Did you know that anything is possible with God?"

Corey, a New Hope UMC youth worker said, "The children learned about the history of Jesus Christ and what he did. I had a nice time working in VBS, and I really enjoyed



Children attending New Hope UMC's vacation Bible school brought in canned goods and monetary donations for the church's food pantry. With a theme of "Hometown Nazareth - Where Jesus Was A Kid," the children and their youth and adult helpers traveled back in time over 2,000 years ago to the dusty town of Nazareth where Jesus lived and was raised by his parents.

the food. The kids really enjoyed it. It's fun to hang out with your friends and talk about Jesus. We try to help out with VBS as much as we can."

Gerri White said, "This has been wonderful as it has brought children not only from this church but from the community and outside of the New Hope community to the church. If we can reach only one child we've done a great job."

Don Oglesby felt, "The activities were wonderful. The children were very creative in making the various items at the booths. This was a great experience for the children and for the adults it was a wonderful teaching opportunity."

Each day the children visited Mary's House. The children listened as Mary (Sharon Darnell) told stories about her son Jesus, of her time in Nazareth, and her talks with

Eunice, a non-believer.

Anne Chambers, who portrayed Eunice, said, "Each time we have a VBS I think it's the best, and it is, thanks to the hard work of Lindsay Chambers who pulled everything together, to Jenny Eure the VBS Celebration Leader, to Sally Morgan who directed the children through the wonderful praise songs, to all of the shopkeepers, and to George and Kathy Brizius for the great food. The children have really enjoyed themselves."

Before finishing the day, kids and adults talked about the daily Bible Point and connected Mary's story with their own lives.

One featured Bible verse was "For nothing is impossible with God" from Luke 1:37.

Each night the children also paused for "God Sightings." During this time

children were encouraged to think of evidences of God...some of the sightings were: a sunset, music, God, pasta, Mary giving Eunice grain, learning that Jesus was a kid just like them, hugs, and friends.

The children wrote the sightings on paper and during each closing celebration, leaders helped the children post them on a wall that was a monument to honor the one true God.

Missions were emphasized during this year's VBS. The children brought in canned goods and monetary donations for the New Hope UMC Food Pantry.

Lindsay Chambers, the Director of the Children's Ministry and VBS said, "What an amazing time we had this year. The children who attended Hometown Nazareth VBS learned what it was like to grow up as Jesus did. They learned that he had much the same experiences that they do today, that he had a name, parents who loved him, a house, and a church where he went to pray. It proved to be a very memorable and exciting time for everyone."

She added, "My thanks to the many volunteers, shop keepers, and tribe leaders. These people went above and beyond to make this year's VBS a total success. This could not have been accomplished without each and every one. Thank you!"



The children who attended Hometown Nazareth VBS learned what it was like to grow up as Jesus did. They learned that he had much the same experiences that they do today, that he had a name, parents who loved him, a house, and a church where he went to pray.

* Patricia Walker Murphy is part of the writing staff of New Hope UMC.

Wesley Foundation from page 5

mid 1950's it became clear a larger facility was needed. A call went out across the conference for help.

Christmas trees were put up in churches throughout the conference, and parishioners were encouraged to pin \$1 bills upon the branches.

Through this and other means \$70,000 was raised, and by 1958 the current Methodist Student Center was completed.

Deaconess Chandler was followed by Reverend James Hobbs from 1962-1969 and Reverend Daniel Earnhardt from 1969-1998.

Hundreds of students have come and gone over the seven decades, but one thing has remained the same; whether they came in bobby socks or flip flops, carried transistor radios or a smart phone, each class of graduating Wesley students has affirmed that "Wesley" has been their Christ-centered "home-away-from-home."

Forty-five to 50 students still gather each Thursday night for a home cooked meal, singing and a message from the director. Other activities include spring break mission trips, small group Bible studies and annual spiritual retreats.

Five area churches held community Vacation Bible School in Efland

A community Vacation Bible School was held in Efland on June 26-30. It was sponsored by a partnership of churches in and around Efland—Efland UMC, Chestnut Ridge UMC, Efland Presbyterian, Gaines Chapel AMEZ and McCoy's Temple Holiness Church. The Ruritan Club of Efland donated the use of their facilities for opening and closing of the VBS, while the churches used their facilities for the classes each night.

A total of 110 students ages two through adults attended. Classes and worship time were held at Efland UMC for ages two through grade six, youth met at Gaines Chapel AMEZ, and adults met at McCoy's Temple. The planning, teaching and leadership of this community effort involved 78 adults.

The idea for holding a community VBS came when the churches realized they were all holding VBS at the same time. Wanting to be more of a community that reached out beyond their churches, the idea became reality and was called a huge success by the program's coordinators.

The partner churches also have held a number of cooperative ministries during the year to reach those in need in the community.



The adult class of the Efland Community Vacation Bible School included members from Efland UMC, Gaines Chapel AME Zion, McCoy's Temple Holiness Church, Efland Presbyterian Church and Chestnut Ridge UMC.

These ministries have included worship, clothing give-aways, soup closet, food-for-all meals and a one-night Pentecost Revival at a community park.

A youth lock-in was also held on July 8-9, sponsored by Efland UMC. Twenty one youth from four of the community churches attended. They learned about the homeless through a number of activities and went to a site in Hillsborough to clear debris and some weeds from land upon which Habitat for Humanity will build a number of homes.

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Hurricane Irene: NC Conference disaster response

A letter from Bishop Gwinn

"Christ calls on us to provide comfort, support, assistance"

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You are aware as I that news reports have shown the destruction our brothers and sisters in the Eastern portion of the North Carolina Conference have experienced.

Joyce and I, along with Elizabeth City District Superintendent Richard Stone, saw first-hand how lives are being stressed to the point of breaking as families face

recovery and ultimately rebuilding from Hurricane Irene's destruction.

My heart broke as I visited and worked in several locations. A couple in their senior years were trying to remove water-soaked items from their home. These items of furniture and mementoes from years past will no longer provide the couple with comfort, security, and support.

This couple was so tired and exhausted, it was difficult for them to even put one foot in front of the other as they worked to make their residence liveable.

When we offered to assist them with removal of a tree blocking part of the way into their home, it was as if we had offered them an unexpected and wonderful gift. It took four of us to remove a section of pier that wind and rain had driven into their home. This couple was doing all they could and needed our physical assistance, our spiritual support and our prayers.

Many of our pastors have reported damage to their church and parsonage and within their congregation.

Our District Disaster Response Coordinators are working on learning the conditions of churches, pastors and church members in areas where there is no telephone service. Electric service has not been restored in these areas as it has not been restored in areas where situations are known.

Christ calls on us to provide comfort, support, and assistance to those who are suffering and in need. To do this, I am asking each congregation to take an offering as soon as possible to provide supplies and other needed assistance.

These funds should be sent to:

NC Conference, P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260. Please be sure to note Advance #S-00176 on the check. Every penny given to this Advance number will go towards storm response.

Second, I ask United Methodists across the Conference to volunteer their time, gifts, and skills through our Conference Call Center to assist God's children that are suffering from Irene's destruction.

Volunteers are needed

in recovery and later in rebuilding.

Call 888-440-9167 to volunteer, schedule a work team, or to donate supplies. Each day we learn of new and expanding ways to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Please consider taking an offering and encouraging United Methodists in our conference to use their gifts as Volunteers for Christ.

Al Gwinn, Resident Bishop

**NC Disaster
Response
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#S-00176**



A delivery of flood buckets is stacked at Bethany UMC in Wanchese by members of Bethany, Mt. Olivet in Manteo, and other volunteers. District Disaster Response Coordinators have begun assessing the damage and requesting assistance to families forced from their homes by storm water. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Conference disaster response

The NC Conference has mobilized trained emergency-response teams to help recovery efforts in the Outer Banks and remote Hyde County on the state's eastern coast.

"Hyde County is not expected to have power for two weeks," said Ann Huffman, the conference's volunteer coordinator. "It was really hit hard,

and we're in the process of finding places for the early response teams to stay and to make sure they can actually access the area."

Huffman added that at least four churches have reported flooding or structural damage or both. At least one pastor's parsonage suffered roof damage.

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Hurricane Irene brings destruction

"...A much more extensive hit than anyone thought." - Gov. Beverly Perdue

By Bill Norton *

"I think I have seen God more in the last hour than in the last month."

That statement was made by Aymie Huntington of Fuquay-Varina as she hauled remnants to the street in Princeville from a tree downed by Hurricane Irene.

She was in the small town in Edgecombe County, established in 1885 by free slaves after the Civil War, serving with 23 other volunteers from N.C., S.C., Ind., and Tenn. removing trees from homes and taking debris to the street.

Hurricane Irene brought devastation to the northeastern coastal areas in North Carolina. Sustained winds of up to 115 mph and a storm surge of up to 8.5 feet pounded the coast and areas inland.

"It's a much more extensive hit than anyone thought," NC Gov. Beverly Perdue told reporters in her first visit to areas hit hard by the storm. "People were distracted by the fact that the media began to say, 'Well, it's not much. It's just a Category 1.'"

Most of the wind and water destruction was in the northeast coastal areas in the Elizabeth City District and in parts of the New Bern and Greenville Districts. Destruction continued into adjoining districts with wind, water and tornadoes. The Outer Banks received extensive damage from the sound side.

Numerous areas along the coast and inland near rivers and streams received water in homes and other buildings.

Hatteras Island was separated from the mainland for at least a week before emergency ferry service could begin.

"North Carolina Conference Disaster Response began Aug. 28, the day after Irene moved out of the state, with assessments and then deliveries of water and clean-up buckets to Wanchese near Manteo and other areas," said Steve Taylor, Conference Outreach Ministries team leader and staff member of the Disaster Response Committee.

A call/operations telephone center was established to coordinate and deploy volunteer and work teams through district disaster response coordinators in affected areas.

"This was the beginning of long recovery that will require large numbers of volunteers and donations of financial resources," Taylor said. "The extent of the damage in some areas is still unknown."

He urged individuals and groups to offer volunteer or supply assistance by calling 888-440-9167.

Donations can be made from the conference website, nccumc.org, or by writing a check to NC Conference, designating it for NC Storm Response, and placing it in a local United Methodist Church offering plate.

"In addition to volunteers for Hurricane Irene response, the NC Conference continues to need skilled workers for the rebuilding phase in areas destroyed by the April tornadoes," Taylor said.

Joining the disaster response efforts after the storm left North Carolina were Bishop and Mrs. Al Gwinn.

Accompanied by Elizabeth City District Superintendent Richard Stone and his wife, Diane, they worked with conference pastors in

Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills, Nags Head, and then to Wanchese on Roanoke Island, about five miles from Manteo.

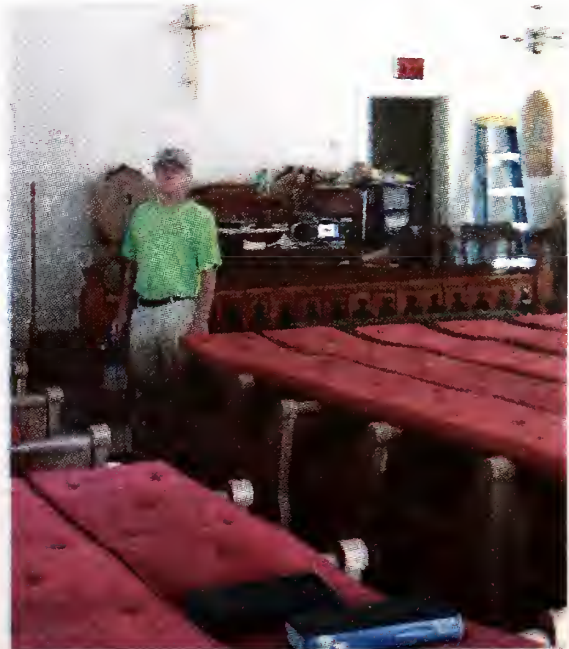
When ferry access to Hatteras Island was available, Bishop Gwinn and Rev. Stone visited and worked in those areas.

"One can imagine the destruction from water in a building creating mildew and mold but there were areas on the Island, like Rodanthe and Avon, where water remained in structures for a week.

Mildew and mold was so bad in those areas that FEMA personnel advised workers to wear hazmat

See "Hurricane Irene," page 2

TOP PHOTO: The cross stands strong. Hurricane Irene's wind and water destroyed the pier at Camp Don Lee but not the cross. The Nature Hut, a counselor's quarters and the front porch of Cabin 5 were severely damaged. Flooding eroded much of the shore and 22 trees were downed. Volunteers responded with equipment and meals to get the camp back in operation. Information about additional workdays will be posted online at www.donleecenter.org. (Photo by Dall Ballard)



The Rev. Richard Stone and Bishop Al Gwinn (not pictured) visited Hatteras Island on Sept. 3 to see firsthand the damage in Avon and the Trl Village area including Waves, Salvo and Rodanthe. (Photo by the Rev. Cory B. Oliver - Hatteras UMC Charge)

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Ways to Help

- Groups can volunteer or donate supplies by calling 888-440-9167 or by emailing disasterresponse@nccumc.org.
- Financial donations may be made through the conference website, nccumc.org. Click on the Hurricane Relief box on the home page.
- To give by check to the NC Conference, designate the gift for NC Storm Response (#S-00176), and place it in a local United Methodist Church offering plate.
- Or mail funds to: NC Conference, P.O. Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260. Please be sure to note NC Storm Response (#S-00176).

Hurricane Irene recovery

Continued from page 1

suits before entering the homes to remove furniture and tear out carpet, walls, and floors," said Bishop Gwinn.

The standing water has also resulted in a large numbers of mosquitoes to the area.

"We have churches, especially on Hatteras Island, that are literally 'out-of-business.' The church building appears to be destroyed and members of those churches must deal with damage in their homes before beginning work on the church," Gwinn said after visiting the island.

He pointed out that "our brothers and sisters need our assistance, and I urge United Methodists, especially those outside the damaged areas, to show the love of Christ to all persons suffering from Hurricane Irene by serving as a volunteer in these areas of destruction and through their financial support."

As of Sept. 23, seven deaths were attributed to the storm, over 1,100 houses were destroyed and 16,000 homes had moderate to severe damage according to the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management website (<http://www.nccrimecontrol.org/>).

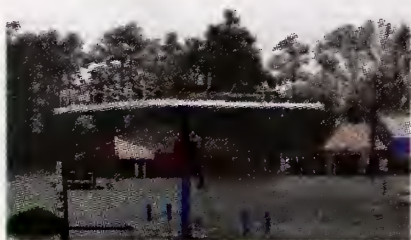
Federal Emergency Declarations were issued for 34 counties, and at the peak of the storm there were 600,000 power outages.

Also, over 24,000 individuals and households have registered for FEMA assistance and over 15,000 have already filed claims.

Crop damage was listed at \$320 million, \$45 million for damage to local governments, and \$40 million for uninsured and underinsured homes and businesses.

More than 270 roads and 21 bridges were closed due to flooding, debris and damage following the storm. "The day after the storm, fallen trees could be seen on almost every lot leading into and through the small town of Pinetops, almost 130 miles from Nags Head," said Taylor.

As of Sept. 20, the NC Conference had committed approximately \$250,000 toward response and recovery efforts. Over half of that amount has already been allocated.



Shown toward the end of the storm, Bayboro UMC in the New Bern District looked like an island surrounded by water. The flooding caused extensive damage inside the buildings.



Rhems UMC in the New Bern District sustained extensive damage from wind and rain. Members of the Rhems Fire Department, located beside the church property, saw wind roll back the church roof. They went into the sanctuary during the storm and removed the piano, pulpit furniture, altar table and all the hymnals and pew Bibles, the Rev. Connie Stutts, pastor of the church, said. Water entered the sanctuary and classroom areas. The sanctuary is shown with all the pews, carpet and other items removed. The damage was estimated to be over \$115,000. "We are thankful to have the fire department as our meeting location until work is completed. Every problem presents possibility, and we are exploring the possibilities for the Kingdom of God," Stutts said.

Over 8,000 clean-up kits (flood buckets) and numerous pallets of water have been sent to affected areas. Most of these supplies have been shipped by NCC United Methodist Men from the warehouses in Goldsboro. Other kits and water have come from outside the conference.

A warehouse has been opened for storm response use in Wanchese and Goodwill Industries in the Research Triangle Park has offered warehouse storage space.

Over the first three weeks following Irene's destructive visit, 81 separate work teams were deployed from the call center. In addition, 60 teams were scheduled for the next few weeks and a potential 337 have yet to be scheduled.

In addition to the NC and Western NC Conferences, these teams have come from S.C., Ala., Fla., Va., Ind., Tenn. and other areas.

"These figures sound impressive but they are just the beginning of what will be needed for us to effectively assist those suffering from Hurricane Irene. For now, our conference is in the response phase. The rebuilding phase is coming for hurricane response. The rebuilding phase is ongoing now for areas devastated by tornadoes in April," said Bishop Gwinn.

"Whether it is providing financial assistance or supplying materials and volunteers for cleanup, tear-out, and rebuilding, these are opportunities for us to be the hands and feet of Christ across the North Carolina Conference now and years ahead," said Bishop Gwinn.

* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.



Trinity UMC's (New Bern District) outdoor chapel was partially submerged, and the church had a number of trees down on the property. (New Bern District photos taken by Dennis Goodwin, district superintendent, and pastors and lay persons from the district.)



Craig Parker (center), Elizabeth City District Disaster Response coordinator, helps move cleaning buckets, food and water, and other items delivered to Bethany UMC in Wanchese by the NCC United Methodist Men. Most homes in Wanchese were damaged by Hurricane Irene. Working with Parker are youth who stayed at the church for several days following the storm. (Photo by Bill Norton)

NCC Storm Response call center coordinates volunteer assignments

Ann Huffman (right), director of the Conference Storm Response Call Center, has been assisting the conference with storm relief since 1999. Calls to the center following Hurricane Irene reached a high of six calls every 15 minutes. From volunteer calls and information from the districts, Huffman assigns teams to specific response sites, depending on the needs, the teams experience and where they want to serve. Part of the assignment process depends on when the team is available and how long they can be of service.

In her position, she is in communication with district disaster response coordinators, participates in conference calls about district needs almost daily, and coordinates material donations and delivery.

She can be reached at 888-440-9167 or at disasterresponse@nccumc.org. She is usually available for telephone calls from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.

If the telephone lines are busy or if the call is made after office hours, a message can be left on the answering system. Any individual or group wanting to volunteer should know the number of people on the team, their experience level, what they would prefer to do, and what days they are available for volunteer assignment. When calling or sending an email, teams should include their email address and/or a telephone number where they can be reached to complete the assignment.

Anyone with donations of clean-up kits or other items should call Huffman or send an email message for information about which location can receive the items.



“The emergency phase is over, we need to tear out and rebuild. It will be months for the residents to either repair or rebuild their homes. Now is a wonderful time for The United Methodist Church to reach out to those affected by Hurricane Irene.”

Richard Stone,
Elizabeth City
district superintendent

LEFT: An eight-person crew from St. Marks UMC in Murfreesboro, TN arrived with their compact tractor with front loader and a skid steer. The team removed a tree on a mobile unit in Princeville. Volunteers from NC and SC Conferences helped clear the limbs.



ABOVE: Cots for sleeping and showers were provided in the First: Rocky Mount annex for the eight volunteers from the Tennessee Conference working in the Rocky Mount District. The district offices are in the same building.



ABOVE: Bishop Al Gwinn and Mrs. Gwinn are shown with other volunteers that participated on a workteam in the Greenville District. In the group were (L-R) Ray Davis, Mary Alice Davenport, Ann Davis, Tate Jenkins, Cliff Harvell, Al Hocutt, Mrs. Gwinn, Bishop Gwinn (kneeling), Tim Russell, Carol Goehring, Beth Hood, and Chris Jenkins. The photo was taken by Alex Warren in Greenville. The volunteers cleaned debris from his yard. (This image was scanned from a card printed by Warren and given to each team member.)



Carpet and other household items damaged by storm water in Wanchese were placed beside the road to be discarded. On the porch, the Rev. Jerome Smith, pastor of Bethany UMC, talks with renter of the house who lost appliances and other household items.

Overview of damage in NCC

Following are some of the damage reports, mainly about conference churches. The information was supplied by district superintendents and district disaster response coordinators shortly after Hurricane Irene left North Carolina and in later reports. Although this listing does not include all churches with damage, it does provide an overview of the affected areas.

Elizabeth City District:

- ♦ Bethany in Wanchese was used as a staging area. Many homes flooded
- ♦ Clarks Bethel at Salvo—flooded with unredeemable damage
- ♦ Shiloh Church at Stumpy Point—flooded with extensive damage
- ♦ Fairhaven at Rodanthe—flooded with extensive damage
- ♦ Colington—200 houses with some form of flooding
- ♦ Kitty Hawk—associate pastor had four feet of water in home
- ♦ Mann's Harbor—numerous homes flooded
- ♦ Manteo—waterfront was flooded and water was in businesses a block away
- ♦ Shiloh (Stumpy Point)—major water damage, piano and organ destroyed
- ♦ St. John at Avon—flooded with extensive damage

Greenville District

- ♦ Aurora—terrible flooding in homes
- ♦ Edwards Chapel in Grifton—large tree down
- ♦ Epworth in Scranton—great flooding, carpet and pews removed
- ♦ First: Washington—wind peeled back section of roof, water damage
- ♦ Rainbow in Snow Hill—water damage in sanctuary
- ♦ Roberson, Ayden, Grifton, Belhaven, Aurora, and Scranton had trees down and extensive power outages.

New Bern District

- ♦ Asbury - damage to sanctuary ceiling, lost shingles
- ♦ Bayboro - severe damage from marsh water in sanctuary, fellowship hall, kitchen, and classrooms. All HVAC was compromised.
- ♦ Beech Grove - trees down, playground damaged
- ♦ Camp Don Lee—pier destroyed, hut damaged, two trees on Craft Building, cabin badly damaged, numerous trees down, debris over campus
- ♦ Cedar Island - damaged roof and minor water damage
- ♦ Cherry Point—tree fell on parsonage, pulled electric service from house
- ♦ Franklin Memorial, Morehead City—about 20 people rode out the storm in the church
- ♦ Hobucken—church building was raised 8 feet off the ground following a previous storm. Water reached the 7.5 foot mark. Many houses flooded.
- ♦ Oriental—long-term power outage, shortage of food. Goldsboro District provided over 8000 pounds of food to Oriental area following the storm.
- ♦ Rhems—sections of roof rolled back by winds, water damaged sanctuary and Sunday school classrooms. Estimated damage of \$115,000.
- ♦ Stacy—four inches of water in church, roof damage
- ♦ Sea Level—about 12 inches of water in church.
- ♦ St. Peters in Morehead City—about 40 people stayed at church during storm, served breakfast after storm to local law enforcement personnel
- ♦ Williston—water in church, siding damage

Goldsboro District

- ♦ Princeton and Salem—roof damage resulting in some water damage



ABOVE: A large tree fell on Vandemere UMC

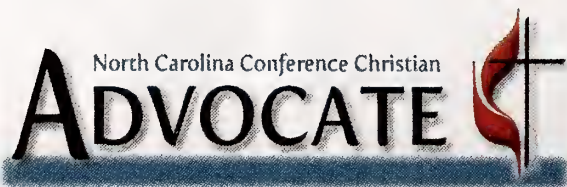
BELOW: Hobucken UMC had roof damage



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Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published. Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Commission members outline final study of ministry report

By Vicki Brown *

Doing away with security of appointment, further streamlining the candidacy process, and allowing ordination when educational requirements are completed are among the major changes proposed by the Study of Ministry Commission.

Members of the Commission, who have prepared legislation for General Conference 2012, outlined their proposals to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Board of Directors during their August meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

The commission members said the aim of legislation is more grace and freedom and fewer rules, more accountability to the gospel and less conformity to an outdated, bureaucratic system, with more participation from young people and less

rhetoric about our good intentions to include and engage younger people.

The Rev. Jay Williams, a 30-year-old provisional elder who serves on the study commission, spoke about the decision to do away with the practice of commissioning and separating full conference membership from ordination.

"The practice of commissioning has not been well understood or accepted. We don't know what it means," he said.

If the commission proposals are approved by General Conference 2012 delegates, elders and deacons could be eligible for ordination as soon as they complete their educational requirements and after serving a minimum of two years as a provisional elder or deacon, they would be eligible for full conference membership.

Bishop Grant Hagiya said the commission members have gotten more negative feedback about this proposal than almost anything in the report.

"I came into the last meeting thinking we should retract early ordination," he said.

"Jay [Williams] argued passionately for it. It hit me that this is not my future. We are forging things that will affect them, not us. The future is not ours; it is our young adults, young clergy and laity. If these younger clergy and laity step up, we really can have a viable future," Hagiya said.

Bishop Hagiya urged Board members who are delegates to General Conference not to vote the whole package up or down based on one or two things they don't like.

He suggested that delegates consider approving part of the legislation, even if not all of it is acceptable.

The Rev. David Dodge said that security of appointment for elders has proved a major stumbling block for missional appointments.

"We have clergy who have proved ineffective and the ways of dealing with them are cumbersome. Removing the security of employment allows bishops to deploy clergy more appropriately to do missional ministry," Dodge said.

In order to ensure that women and racial-ethnic clergy are treated fairly, the commission proposed that the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy meet annually to review and evaluate the commitment of their bishops to open itineracy.



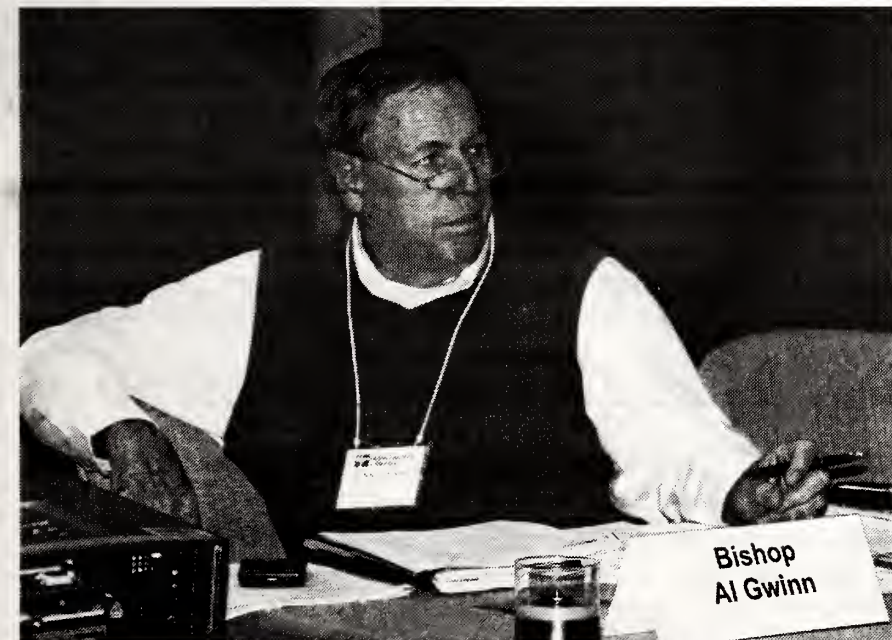
The Rev. Jay Williams, a 30-year-old provisional elder, outlines how the changes in the candidacy processed proposed by the Ministry Study Commission will make ordained ministry a more viable option for young adults. (Photo by Donnie Reed)

Other legislation proposed by the commission would:

- ♦ Require annual conferences to have a vocational discernment coordinator charged with making the candidacy process more inviting and accessible, strengthening the candidacy mentoring program, and giving guidance and training to mentors.
- ♦ Require all candidates for licensed or ordained ministry to attend an orientation to ministry conference in their annual conference. This common experience will begin to build collegiality and understanding among the varieties of set-apart ministry.

Read the full report of the Study of Ministry Commission at www.gbhem.org/ministrystudy.

* Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, Gen. Board of Higher Education & Ministry.



NC Conference Bishop Al Gwinn chaired the Study of Ministry Commission.

Imagine No Malaria ministry goes mobile with Android app

The United Methodist Church's Imagine No Malaria campaign is using technology to fight mosquitoes with the launch of a new mobile application that keeps mosquitoes away and also raises funds for the fight against malaria. The new mobile app repels mosquitos using sound instead of spray. When used, the application emits three different high-pitched frequencies that serve as a deterrent for mosquitoes.

Available for download on the Android platform at a cost of \$.99, 70 percent of the proceeds benefit the fight against malaria in Africa. In addition, the app provides information about malaria, and a link to

ImagineNoMalaria.org for those who wish to donate to the cause.

Imagine No Malaria is a ministry of the people of The United Methodist Church to eliminate death and suffering from malaria in Africa by 2015.

For more information, visit the website www.ImagineNoMalaria.org.



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Celebrate Church Library Month with the Media Center

October is designated Church Library Month by the National Church Library Association, a professional network of church librarians.

Church Library Month provides an opportunity for local churches to promote their church library and to learn more about ways the Conference Media Center can be of assistance.

Throughout October, the Media Center will be posting new resources and providing fun activities, and possibly some surprises, on the website nccumc.org/mediacenter to help local churches know about available resources and to offer assistance to grow a partnerships to better provide Christian education resources for use in the local church.

Visit the Media Center's website throughout October to find:

- ♦ Contests, prizes
- ♦ Interactive blog posts
- ♦ Bulletin insert & blurb
- ♦ Guide to eBooks and training resources for church librarians
- ♦ New electronic resource every day
- ♦ New reviews every week
- ♦ Tips on using the Media Center
- ♦ The center's wish list

All churches in the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church may borrow resources from the Media Center free of charge. There is no membership fee.

Comprehensive subject guides are available to assist churches with locating all of the available resources on a specific topic. Each subject guide includes lists of resources for all age groups, recommended keywords for searching, and a list of related UMC web-sites. The subject guides are available online at: <http://nccumc.org/mediacenter/subject-guides>.

In addition, the librarian is available to provide a customized list of recommendations.



The NCC Media Center is a service open to all of the local churches in the NC Conference. Most of the resources are for use with small groups, but many books, videos, and other resources are available for individual study. All resources may be seen by searching the online catalog or browse the shelves at the Media Center from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday-Thursday. For questions while browsing online at nccumc.org/mediacenter, use the "Chat with the Librarian" feature available in the left sidebar.

Montreat College and NC Wesleyan College announce graduate program partnership

By Diane C. LeFiles *

Montreat College in Montreat and North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount have announced a partnership that will add two graduate programs designed specifically to meet the needs of working adults who want to pursue advanced degrees in the area of business or elementary education.

The alliance was formed through the Partnership for Advanced Learning to allow the colleges to collaborate and begin offering master's level classes on the Wesleyan campuses in the Triangle and Rocky Mount.

"This exciting partnership will allow Wesleyan graduates to make a seamless transition to Montreat College and enhance educational opportunities for all adults in our region," said Dr. Evan Duff, vice president for adult programs at NCWC.

The graduate program is focused on the Master of Science in Management and Leadership (MSML), as well as the Master of Education: Elementary Education (M.Ed).

The MSML will be offered first at the Triangle location in Morrisville

beginning in September, followed by the opening of the M.Ed. program in Rocky Mount in spring 2012.

The college plans to expand the MSML offerings to the Rocky Mount campus as demand increases.

"Partnering with NCWC is a great fit for Montreat. Wesleyan is well-respected and the caliber of students they graduate is nothing short of impressive," said Jonathan E. Shore, Jr., Montreat vice president of professional and adult studies.

"We are excited to bring our master's level programs to their locations in the eastern part of the state and look forward to further strengthening this innovative partnership approach to higher education," said Shore.

According to Duff, students will progress through this program as a cohort group.

He explained, "Each cohort will start the program together and go through a sequence of courses until they finish the program together in 18-24 months. They will take one course at a time by attending class one night a week. This approach will provide working adults a comfortable

pace, as well as a supportive peer group with which to study."

The MSML degree curriculum is composed of six-week courses with a couple of seven-week and one eight-week course. All courses in the education master's degree program are on a 12-week schedule.

The programs tuition includes text books and financial aid is available for qualified individuals. Wesleyan graduates receive a 10 percent discount on their tuition. Individuals seeking more information should visit the website www.ncwc.edu/adult or call 1-800-806-2777.

"Our newly-forged partnership with NC Wesleyan College enables Montreat College to deliver cohort-based, quality Christ-centered graduate education to their students in Raleigh and Rocky Mount," said Marshall Flowers, Jr., Montreat senior vice president and provost. "Montreat's faculty and administration count it a privilege to meaningfully serve the Wesleyan constituency."

* Diane C. LeFiles is director of communications for NC Wesleyan College.

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Celebrating Native American Ministries



Every member in mind – a legacy of leadership at Sandy Plains UMC

Despite being a small, rural congregation in an impoverished part of North Carolina, Sandy Plains United Methodist Church has sent a large proportion of its members into mission, leaving some to wonder: How has this tiny church produced so many leaders?

By Cherry Crayton *

Alan PreVatte has seen “the plaque” hanging in a hallway outside the pastor’s office since he joined Sandy

Plains UMC in Pembroke in the mid-1990s. But he still gets excited when he talks about it.

“The plaque” is a wooden tablet no bigger than a shirt box that has been around so long that nobody remembers when it was installed or whose idea it was to put it up.

The top — a black metal plate with capital letters engraved in gold — reads: “Sandy Plains/United Methodist Church/In Mission.” Under that is Isaiah 6:8: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? / Then said I, Here am I; send me.”

And under that is a list of the names — on individual black plates — of those who have attended Sandy Plains during the past 50 years

and gone on to work in missions.

It includes missionaries, church planters and denominational officials. In all, there are 19 names representing 19 Christian leaders — 16 of them clergy — who have come out of Sandy Plains.

Nineteen might not seem so significant until you consider this: Sandy Plains averages about 85 people in worship each Sunday, and it’s located in a town of 2,800 where 39 percent of residents live below the poverty line, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. (Nationwide, the rate is 13.5 percent.)

“Here am I, send me”

And though there is no hard data tracking how many ordained leaders come out of congregations, most Christian leaders tend to come from larger churches where there are often more programs and opportunities, said the Rev. Jeremy Troxler, director of Duke Divinity School’s Thriving Rural Communities initiative, of which Sandy Plains is a part.

Based on anecdotal evidence, it’s most common for a small church to raise up one clergy person per generation, he said.

So for one small church to send out nearly 20? “It’s remarkable,” Troxler said. “The church may not be using the language ‘leadership development,’ but that’s exactly what it’s doing.”

And that’s why, PreVatte said, every once in a while, he’ll find himself staring at or thinking about “the plaque” — a reminder of where the church has come from and where it hopes its members continue to go: in mission.

The tribute to the 19 already there encourages PreVatte — and it excites him and amazes him, often leaving him wondering: “How has such a little rural church produced so many leaders?”

A servant leader

It started with the first name listed on “the plaque”: the Rev. Simeon Cummings, pastor emeritus of Sandy Plains whom church members and former clergy describe as a servant leader driven by concern for his people.

Sandy Plains is named for and located in one of five boroughs in Pembroke, a town in central North Carolina near the South Carolina state line. Pembroke was settled by the Lumbee, a Native American tribe, and nearly 90 percent of the town’s residents today are Lumbee, as are most Sandy Plains attendees. The church is one of 13 affiliated with the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry.

When Sandy Plains UMC was organized in 1906 by Lumbee Methodists, including Cummings’ father, Jim Crow and miscegenation laws had long been in effect.

The Lumbee, many of whom were also tenant farmers, were oppressed and marginalized in much the same way as blacks, Cummings said in a 1995 interview for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte’s oral history project, Native Carolinian Indian Elders.

“To be successful in my day, you had to kind of deny who you were,” said Cummings, who grew up attending Sandy Plains, in 1995. “I could always see how far my people were behind other people.”

When he served in the U.S. Army during World War II, he told himself that if he made it back home, he would “be a leader to help my Indian people.”

He graduated in 1948 from what was then Pembroke State College for Indians and taught in segregated public schools for eight years before attending Duke Divinity School.



LEFT: Alan PreVatte

See “Every member in mind” page 8

Every member in mind – a legacy of leadership

continued from page 7

Why divinity school?

He thought it was important for Native American churches to have Native American leaders, he said in 1995.

He went on to pastor Prospect UMC in Maxton for 20 years; lead the Southeastern Jurisdictional Association for Native American Ministries, a job that involved pastoring seven small churches, including Sandy Plains; and serve on the N.C. Conference staff.

Throughout it all, he maintained his ties to his home church and mentored its pastors, stressing the importance of raising up leaders.

Drawing upon the example of his childhood pastor, the Rev. Dr. Fuller Lowery, he employed a philosophy based on the mantra "Every member in mind."

"Born out of struggle was an intent

to create space for Native Americans to lead," said the Rev. Bob Mangum, who served as pastor of Sandy Plains in the '60s, '70s and 2000s and who has worked alongside Cummings, now 91, for the past 50-plus years.

"Stories were nurtured to develop faithful disciples who just did not talk about the Spirit, but who responded to it."

Every member in mind

Today, the pastor of Sandy Plains is the Rev. Gregg Presnal. On his business card, displayed in prominent bold type, is the phrase: "Ministers: All Sandy Plains Members!" This message underscores the "Every member in mind" mindset that is his congregation's legacy.

"As far back as I can remember, the church has always had strong leadership," said Gary Locklear, who has



Duke Divinity intern Jason Villeagas (left) leads a young adults class.

been a member of Sandy Plains for more than 40 years.

"They were tenacious about it. They listened carefully. They sat with people. They worked with people. They told a story of how important it was to have native leadership in native churches, and they encouraged it," he said.

This includes creating opportunities for members to envision and to test their vocational calling.

During Locklear's first year of college, for example, a Sunday school teacher asked him to teach one week, and then another, and then to take over the entire class.

Now he's a home missionary and co-director of the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry.

The church also brings Christian institutional leaders to revivals, services and information sessions about UMC doctrine and polity. Leaders who have come out of Sandy Plains are invited to come back and speak.

This empowers church members to imagine becoming one of those leaders, too, Locklear said.

The church also urges all its members to take advantage of the offerings of UMC-related programs, including lay speaker training, Discover God's Call retreats and, for youth, an annual vocational conference.

Take PreVatte, for example. He's an information technology administrator at UNC-Pembroke.

At the encouragement of church leaders, he completed UMC's certificate program in lay speaker training. Within weeks of finishing his first classes, he was asked to preach at Sandy Plains. PreVatte preached that Sunday, and he has preached several times since.

As the superintendent of Sunday school classes, he also leads the congregation in prayer and hymns before the three adult classes begin.

Or, consider the Rev. Deborah Wilkins. As a Sandy Plains member, she participated in the three-day spiritual renewal program Walk to Emmaus in the late 1990s.

There, Wilkins listened to the stories of grief from other women — stories "as grievous as what I had buried in me," she said.

In 1988, when her son, Gabriel, was 11 years old, he was struck by a car and killed. Over the next decade, Wilkins buried herself in work and in church, and she struggled with the cross. "Why would God require that for salvation?" she wondered. "Wasn't there some other way?"

The day she returned home from the Emmaus program, she read Isaiah 53 again. That's when the "cross opened up to me," she said. Soon after, in 1999, in her mid-40s, she began work on a master of divinity degree at Duke.

"Sandy Plains is a spirit-filled church," said Wilkins, who is in her third appointment as pastor of Wesley UMC in Riegelwood. "The community helped me make the connection that God sees us all and he is there in the midst of the grieving and he grieves, too."

Partners in ministry, not objects

The "every member in mind" attitude extends beyond the walls of the church to social justice issues in the community and in the denomination.

When he was Sandy Plains' pastor during the civil rights era, Mangum sponsored voter registration drives. He also helped establish nonprofits such as the Robeson County Church and Community Center to provide food, clothes, shelter and other services to Native Americans.

And Mangum worked with Cummings to ensure the Lumbee churches had a voice in the UMC.

Notably, they decried that Native Americans had no representation among the conference-level leadership, and they rallied the UMC to appoint three lay people from Lumbee churches to committees, paving the way for Cummings to become the first Native American conference staff



Panthia Locklear makes collages with the kids in her children's Sunday school class.

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See "Every member in mind" page 9

Creating expectations for laity to serve

All of the encouragement to explore a call at Sandy Plains UMC complements a larger effort: to put laity to work in meaningful ways.

By Cherry Crayton *

If you ask the people whose names appear on "the plaque" at Sandy Plains United Methodist Church how their movement to ministry began, they'll share a similar story: The church encouraged them to explore their call, their call came later in life, and the church provided support once they received the call.

Perhaps no better illustration about how this plays out can be found than in the story of the Rev. Larry Chandler. "The Holy Spirit is working there in a strong way to bring leaders," he said. "There is a sense of being a servant, and the church helps you embody that and act it out in your life."

When Chandler began attending Sandy Plains in the mid-1990s, he was a ninth-grade dropout with a history of alcoholism and drug addiction. He had come to the church through his wife, Beverly.

She had first come to Sandy Plains through a former pastor, the Rev. Bob Mangum, who used to drive an old station wagon to pick up children in Pembroke and bring them to Sunday services. Beverly was one of those children.

Though a few pastors have come and gone since Beverly matured into adulthood, the church's emphasis on "Every member in mind" had long seeped into the congregation and was being carried on by lay leaders and succeeding pastors.

Among those was Rev. Kong Suk Namkung, who led Sandy Plains in the 1990s. On Chandler's second visit to the church, Namkung asked him to greet people and take down the names and contact information of visitors. When Namkung visited the guests at their homes during the week, he asked Chandler to join him. Then, he asked Chandler to use his work van to pick up people who needed a ride to church. And he met with Chandler and his wife to lead them in an individual study of the Bible — taking them from Genesis to Revelation — before they joined an adult Sunday school class.

After a time, at Namkung's encouragement, Chandler was completing UMC-sponsored programs such as lay speaker training.

Each invitation allowed Chandler to envision something a little more for his life and vocation, he said. He went on to complete course work for a GED and a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy before earning a master of divinity from Duke University in 2004. When he was enrolled at Duke, church members gave him small amounts of money every once in a while to help with expenses, and he received support from a special offering collected at United Methodist churches for Native Americans studying to be clergy.

Today, he's the pastor of Asbury UMC in Cove City (New Bern District).

"One of the things that was important to me was having someone who would include me, who gave me something to do, who believed in me, and who helped me to bring out the potential that God had for me," Chandler said.

"You might see that happening in other churches — I don't know — but there is something about the Holy Spirit and the fire that is at work in Sandy Plains."



The plaque at Sandy Plains UMC



* Cherry Crayton is assistant editor for Faith & Leadership (www.faithandleadership.com), where this article was first published.



Alan Prevatte (center, red tie) leads an adult class in a prayerful discussion.

Every member in mind

continued from page 8

member in 1973.

"That was pioneering — to now have three lay people on conference committees," Mangum said. "It gave entry to hearing the call to missions ... and to opening up the doors for Native Americans to the idea that we have a place in church leadership ... and that we intend ... to be a partner in ministry, not an object of ministry."

Emphasis on education

Sandy Plains leadership also places a broad emphasis on education.

This starts at the youngest ages: In 1997, under the guidance of the pastor at the time, the Rev. Kong Suk Namkung, the church built a childcare center to serve the local community.

Just a few years ago, with assistance from a Duke Endowment grant, Sandy Plains built a new facility for the center on its grounds, creating new jobs in an economically depressed area. Larger than the church itself, the childcare center is self-sustaining and has an average enrollment of 93.

For older children, the church brings in school counselors and journalism teachers to help coach high school students in how to find and apply for college scholarships and loans.

And for adults, they give to special offerings that provide scholarships for Native Americans entering ministry.

In addition, the Sandy Plains congregation regularly supports Locklear's mission work.

For instance, they provide hands or supplies for Locklear's work teams that repair deteriorating houses in Native American communities in the Carolinas, and they join him on mission trips to Bolivia.

"The church has an ethos defining itself by service to community, and I'm certain that is what makes a space for people to hear a call to ministry,"

said Troxler, of Duke's Thriving Rural Communities initiative.

The future leaders

Following a recent Sunday service, several Sandy Plains members gathered with Mangum in the 200-seat sanctuary to talk about the church's history and its future.

There's concern because half of the current Native American clergy in the Native American cooperative ministry will retire in the next decade, Locklear said.

"We've got to find some more leaders and we've got to court those young leaders and challenge them to look at the call," he said.

They brainstormed ways to embolden others to pursue missions: You have to create space for laity, give them vocational experiences, present them with opportunities to imagine themselves as leaders, and encourage them to ask harder questions of themselves and of God.

That requires humble leadership, they said, leadership like that of Cummings — a purposeful, prayerful leader intent to be there for his people.

And it requires an intentional commitment to the same aim Cummings began more than 50 years ago: "to empower people and send them into ministry," Locklear said.

The effect of that is on display in Sandy Plains — on "the plaque" that lists the names of the 19 from the church who have gone on into missions. There is space for more.

The next name added to it could be Alan Prevatte. The 48-year-old and father of five will begin work on his master of divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary this fall.

* Cherry Crayton is assistant editor for Faith & Leadership (www.faithandleadership.com), where this article was first published.

Native American churches in the Carolinas work together to build vitality and hope

Lumbee and Pee Dee Indian congregations offer hope amid suffering through a cooperative ministry of The United Methodist Church

By Jesse James DeConto *

Tonya Hernandez's trailer was a mess, and Gary Locklear's work team from Sandy Plains United Methodist Church in Pembroke was there to fix it.

They inspected the rotting boards on the roof eaves, the holes in the front door and a broken window. The roof had been leaking, and the carpet was stained brown and black.

A single mother of three, Hernandez had been paralyzed two years ago in an accident that killed her fiancé. She uses a wheelchair, which makes it hard for her even to reach the shelves in her home.

"Brother Gary, you've got enough work here for about four teams," said the Rev. Kelly Hunt, the pastor at nearby Hickory Grove United Methodist Church in Clio, S.C.

Locklear knew the work wouldn't be done in a day, but he was undeterred; he planned to bring more teams throughout the summer.

"We can make her life a little better," said Locklear, a home missionary and church and community worker with the UMC's Global Ministries.

Making life better has been a focus for the Lumbee Indian United Methodists of North Carolina in this poverty-stricken part of the

Carolinas for many years.

Drawing on the strength of God and their Native American heritage, they have seen their efforts pay off in steady progress. The community's investments — particularly in the education and nurturing of youth — have raised the community beyond the subsistence level and have created places of vitality and hope.

The Lumbee Indian community

Locklear is an example and embodiment of this ethos. The youngest child from a Lumbee farming family, he and five of his 10 older siblings enrolled at the University of North Carolina-Pembroke to become teachers.

After a career in teaching, then as a human-resources trainer, he began serving as lay leader at Sandy Plains. Six months into his retirement, he accepted an assignment as a home missionary and has taken on many leadership roles in the community, including co-director of the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry.

Locklear has become one of the spiritual leaders of his big family, embodying the lessons from his parents, who always shared their farm produce with neighbors in need.

Along with his co-missioner, the Rev. Sylvia Collins-Ball, Locklear facilitates opportunities for local Native American United Methodists to serve their communities and beyond.

"The most important people in the world are those who share their knowledge with others and those who love unloved people," Locklear said.

Locklear is one of about 55,000 Lumbee Indians inhabiting four counties in southern central North Carolina. They are descended from people who migrated from South Carolina in the 1700s to live along the Lumber River.

The Methodist Church began making inroads in the area in the late 19th century, eventually developing programs focused on Native Americans.

Throughout their history, the Lumbee have worked for civil rights and, in particular, for public education. The church has been an integral part of these efforts. In the 1880s, for example, Prospect UMC in Maxton joined with the Lumbee community in the effort to establish the Croatan Normal School, now the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

The Jim Crow era saw conflict over the white Methodists' leadership in the Lumbee community but paved the way for the 1960s and 1970s, when Methodists joined Quakers in registering Lumbees to vote and in fighting for Lumbee jobs in local government, sending the message that they could chart the course of their own lives and community.

Many in the area are poor. According to a 2007 Children's Defense Fund analysis of census data, about one-third of North Carolina's American Indian children live in pov-

erty, and the tribe's efforts to secure services that other recognized tribes receive have not been successful.

Still, within that context, the community's efforts have had some impact. Many local Lumbees have entered the middle class, working as teachers, lawyers and health care professionals, and have benefitted from education and empowerment over the decades.

From this position of relative strength have

sprung indigenous leaders in service to others, on both sides of the North-South Carolina border and beyond.

Locklear is one of the more prominent lay leaders among Lumbee United Methodists, but he's certainly not the only one.

The 13 Native American United Methodist churches that make up the cooperative have 2,300 members, more than 100 of which have gone through the N.C. Conference's training for lay speakers. They can lead Sunday school and fill the pulpit.

The cooperative ministry, founded in 1995, provides congregations the opportunity "to envision and become involved in ministry they would not do individually."

Through the cooperative, the 13 member churches join together in social service outreach, whether education programs, mission trips or house-renovation work teams.

It's through the cooperative that local United Methodists try to meet current physical needs and also train a new crop of leaders to become the next generation of mission volunteers and lay speakers.

The passion button

With leadership development efforts such as an annual vocational conference for youth, the cooperative has raised up dozens of Native American clergy to serve its own churches and others in North Carolina — about 20 from the small Sandy Plains congregation alone.

Its community-empowerment efforts over the decades have encouraged the belief that Native American people ought to lead themselves — so they do.

"For too long, Indian people have been treated as children — told what we should think, how we should think, where we should go, how we should do it," said the Rev. David Hill, a native Lumbee from nearby Scotland County, and the pastor at Living Saviour Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Charlotte.

The leadership initiatives have been one part of the cooperative's effort to marshal the resources of the small churches in a long-term, collaborative effort.

This summer, the cooperative sent 25 kids to study math, some at UNC-Pembroke and some at a new math academy.

See "Native American churches" pg 11



The Rev. Gregg Presnal (far right, rear), pastor of Sandy Plains UMC, leads the congregation in a moment of hands-on prayer.

Native American churches in the Carolinas work together

continued from page 10



It also organized a team of youth to visit local schools and educate their peers about the dangers of tobacco, and it used a \$25,000 grant from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to open a computer lab for local youth.

"Lay people are some of the movers and shakers," said the Rev. John Kalz, a Kentucky pastor

who interned at Sandy Plains UMC in 2008 and brought some of the workers who repaired Hernandez's house. "There's a really deep spiritual life, and that is lived out publicly."

The Indian leaders foster a sense of unity that moves people to serve, said Collins-Ball.

A ready sense of trust allows native leaders to tap into tight-knit family relationships to motivate groups of people to action.

"When we have Native American pastors in place who identify with the community, who come out of the community, who understand the community, the church does better," she said. "It pushes the passion button."

One of the places that passion surfaces is in worship. Laypeople's involvement in powerful worship has drawn many into leadership, including ordained ministry, said the Rev. Jeremy Troxler, director of Duke Divinity School's Thriving Rural Communities initiative.

"You just had this sense of a roomful of people genuinely crying out to God. The worship life of the church arises out of a history of pain, but [also] hope," Troxler said. "It's in that context that they're able to hear the call to ministry."

Reaching south of the borders

The cooperative has leveraged its resources to look beyond its own community.

For 14 years, the group has led regular mission trips to Bolivia. It also supports a food pantry in Lumberton and a soup kitchen in Pembroke.



Gary Locklear shows volunteers around the exterior of the house.

In addition, Locklear tries to channel efforts — like the work team at Hernandez's house — toward the two UMC churches across the border in South Carolina that serve the Pee Dee Indians, a related tribe.

That state's Pee Dee Indian community is so small and so remote that the North Carolina United Methodist Conference absorbed the congregations so they could be in the cooperative with the 11 Lumbee churches in North Carolina.

There is still significant poverty among the Lumbee, but observers say the Pee Dee Indians are much worse off. The Lumbee have some political clout in North Carolina, but across the border, a Pee Dee population in the hundreds doesn't have the same sort of power.

"In South Carolina, the Indians are very invisible," Locklear said. "There's no such thing as an Indian there; you're either white or black. This abject poverty...in South Carolina, it's pretty much the norm for Indian people."

One of those Pee Dee churches is Hickory Grove UMC, which hosted work teams from Pennsylvania this summer that delivered clothing and home goods to a picnic pavilion outside the church as sort of a free flea market.

"A lot of the people in that community kind of look at that church as the place where you can find food if you really need it," Locklear said.

The cooperative provides not only material assistance but also spiritual leadership.

Terence Hunt, a Lumbee from

North Carolina, leads adult Sunday school at Hickory Grove two or three times each month.

He was trained as a lay speaker through Prospect Church, now one of the largest Native American churches in the U.S. He said churches are trying to build in South Carolina the same hope for a better life that grew in the Lumbee community.

Almost none of the Pee Dee finish high school, and illiteracy makes it almost impossible for them to rise out of poverty.

"It's almost like the Third World," said Hunt, who is retired from a job in home construction.

"It's sort of become accepted as their fate. It's just carried on and on for generations. We're hoping we can take the word of the Lord and break that. You can change and make a difference. Your life isn't necessarily determined by fate. It's not fate but faith," he said.

Hernandez's 12-year-old daughter, Catalina, was one of five kids from Hickory Grove to attend the math academy. Catalina's father returned to Mexico years ago. Hernandez's late fiance Lonnie Samuel had been helping her raise the three children, now ages 14, 12 and 8.

But since the accident, Hernandez has depended on public assistance to feed her kids and pay the rent.

"I'm up and down, because the kids have me stressed out, but God is there," Hernandez said. "I thank God every day. God's never turned his back on me."

Catalina plans to join the military or become a nurse when she grows up. "I hope she goes with the nursing," her mother said. "She's always talked about going to college, and I want to see her succeed in what she wants to do."

** Jesse James DeConto is a freelance writer living in Durham. This article was first published in Faith & Leadership (www.faithandleadership.com).*

The Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry (RDNACM) has a membership of 13 United Methodist churches. Several of the churches are located outside of the Rockingham District.

The Cooperative Ministry was founded in 1995 and provides opportunities for the member churches "to envision and become involved in ministry they would not do individually."

The mission of the Native American Cooperative Ministry is to strengthen its member churches in mission and ministry together to foster church growth, to engage the churches in outreach ministry to hear God's calling to be the Body of Christ.

With the Rockingham District as its home base, the Cooperative is located in an optimum location to serve almost half of the Native American population in the state. Approximately 2,400 live throughout North Carolina.

Member Churches

- Ashpole Center UMC – Rowland
- Branch St. UMC – Lumberton
- Collins Chapel UMC – Lumber Ridge
- Coharie UMC – Clinton
- Fairview UMC – Hamer, SC
- First UMC – Pembroke
- Grace UMC – Fayetteville
- Hickory Grove UMC – Clio, SC
- New Philadelphia UMC – Red Springs
- Pleasant Grove UMC – Rowland
- Prospect UMC – Maxton
- Sandy Plains UMC – Pembroke
- West Robeson UMC – Maxton

The Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministries – "Every Member in Ministry" is an Advance of the NC Conference.

This advance supports the work of the collaboration among the 14 Native American churches. Contributions are welcome and can be made by placing a check, designated for #S-00143, #791001 or for Native American Cooperative Ministries, in any United Methodist Church offering plate.

BRAC UPDATE

Conference churches are ministering to military families

By Jaye White *

Many churches in the NC Conference are ministering to military families. Below are some examples:

Fayetteville District

Several churches from the Fayetteville and Sanford Districts contributed 1000 baby blankets to the Fayetteville Cares Baby Shower for military families.

The churches of the Sampson Charge, pastored by the Rev. Bobby Herring, hosted a workshop entitled 'Living in the New Normal' which dealt with life of military members who experience multiple deployments and the effects it has on their families.

Dr. Jerry Powell from the Fayetteville Family Life Center and Jaye White explored the effects of combat on the psyche and the stress of reintegration into so-called "normal" life.

They highlighted how the church can be the place of compassion and grace, so needed by those who serve.

Sanford District

A prime example of that grace, known through our Savior, was embodied by a rural congregation.

The Rev. Nancy Willard of Roseland UMC, outside Aberdeen, spoke on behalf of her congregation when she wrote a letter to the editors of several area newspapers that had reported a theft at their church by a soldier.

She wrote:

"The young man charged with these offenses is a valued member of our community and his family is beloved by our congregation. Although we are deeply saddened

by these charges, our congregation is committed to forgiveness and will do all that we can to love and support both this man and his family.

"We have supported Sgt. Reeve during his deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan and have just recently celebrated his safe return from war. No matter the outcome of his court case, we will continue to offer him love and support in spite of these actions.

"We are committed to the support of all our military personnel. They put their lives on the line every day in service to this country. We not only support them with our prayers and letters during their deployment, but will continue to love and support them after they return home."

Her testimony to the community at large was an affirmation of the church's love and acceptance of anyone living in the area who experienced unspeakable trauma in war.

What she didn't report was that the congregation stepped up to post this young man's bail in order to prevent him from being counted absent without leave (AWOL). They were proactive in extending Christ's mercy

to one in need.

Another church supporting military service members is Jonesboro UMC in Sanford which has a heart for those who serve in the military.

Since 2008, Jonesboro has adopted five different units serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

They have sent care packages, Christmas presents and prayers. They held yard sales to pay for playground equipment, which was shipped overseas, and they continue to collect cell phones for soldiers.

A returning soldier visited them to thank them for all the gifts, and one unit presented them with a flag to show their appreciation.

The congregation of Jonesboro UMC made a difference in the lives of many soldiers and extended the love of Christ through their efforts.

New Bern District

The Rev. Diane LeBlanc of Maysville UMC is a former Marine and the director of the New Bern District Operation Compassion.

This group provides support

to military families in the Camp LeJuene/Cherry Point communities. They particularly reach out to new mothers. Operation Compassion is being the presence of Christ to families in transition.

Share information, upcoming workshop

Many other churches have active and vibrant ministries to military service members and their families.

Other churches supporting those who serve in the military are invited to share information about this support with the Rev. Jaye White (jayewhite@nccumc.org).

An upcoming workshop will be hosted at Duke Divinity School on Nov. 11-12 to discuss faith and military service, entitled "After the Yellow Ribbon." (See page 17 for more information.)

Registration is available on the Duke website at <http://divinity.duke.edu/after-the-yellow-ribbon>.

* The Rev. Jaye White is the NC Conference BRAC mission developer. She can be reached by email at jayewhite@nccumc.org or by telephone at (910) 308-0143.



RIGHT: The Rev. Diane LeBlanc (left), a former Marine, serves as Lead Pastor at Maysville UMC and as Program Coordinator for Operation Compassion, a ministry of the New Bern District. To her right are Allie and her son, Trent. Allie's husband is a Marine, currently serving in Afghanistan.

Operation Compassion works with groups like the Military Wives Club to support them with planned activities and other events in an effort to show appreciation of the ongoing sacrifice that they make.

From my perspective:

Churches must be intentional about providing hope and healing to military service members and their families

By Jaye White *

Recently the *Fayetteville Observer* ran an article featuring the ministry efforts of Matthew Youngblood, who is planting a new church community in the Spout Springs area north of Ft. Bragg, in response to population growth due partly to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law movement of military forces.

As a newly licensed United Methodist pastor, Matthew has recognized the special needs of military service members and their families and has reached out to them through personal, caring Christian contact.

He is focused on making disciples

of Christ among people who have experienced the trauma of war, multiple deployments and separation from family and friends.

As we recently commemorated the 10 year anniversary of the tragedy of Sept. 11, more and more military members are in need of the healing and solace only our Savior can provide.

Churches have been asked by Mrs. Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden to partner with their 'Joining Forces' efforts (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces>).

Only 1% of the American population serves in the U.S. military, but they are asking 100% of Americans

to support our troops and their families.

Much has been reported about the astronomical suicide rate among service members.

Many are returning with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury or missing limbs.

Additionally, the divorce rate is higher than the U.S. average and statistics show that children suffer when a parent is deployed for extended periods, both emotionally and academically.

Churches are in a unique position to assist those who have faced multiple separations from loved ones, which increases stress, leading to long-term effects on mental and emotional health.

All branches of service have stepped up efforts to increase resiliency in their forces and family members.

They have publicized spiritual health as an essential component of total health, but are limited by continuing misperceptions that asking for help is a sign of weakness and will inhibit promotions, which will affect career advancement and income.

Churches must be intentional about providing alternative sources for hope and healing.

Making an effort to integrate service members and their families in our congregations will allow them to feel connected when families are far away.

National Guard, Reservists and

veterans are often separated from others who share their experiences, so it is particularly important to recognize their presence in every community and to extend Christian love to those who have served our country.

Despite our political leanings or thoughts about the present conflicts we're engaged in, we must recognize this population of God's people as those needing the balm of the Great Physician.

Stephen Ministers are a great resource for any congregation, but churches should at least have a counseling referral list available.

Churches can also partner with other congregations to provide support groups for veterans or spouses.

They can raise awareness of the sacrifices families endure and recognize the children of service members, encouraging their bravery and strength.

Invite newcomers to participate in outreach ministries (they already have a heart for service!).

Provide food, diapers or gift cards to spouses who have a loved one in a war zone, or offer free babysitting services so they can have a break.

Be specific when offering help, but do not assume you know what they need! Ask first.

And, if they offer to teach a class or help out in the kitchen, let them! Feeling needed is a step toward having a sense of belonging.

A great resource for ideas is a book entitled, 'Beyond the Yellow Ribbon: Ministering to Returning Combat Veterans' by David A. Thompson & Darlene Wetterstrom. It is available through Cokesbury.

Let us truly be the church of open hearts, open minds and open doors!

* The Rev. Jaye White is the NC Conference BRAC mission developer. She can be reached by email at jayewhite@nccumc.org or by telephone at (910) 308-0143.



ABOVE: At Spring Hill UMC in Lillington, the prayer shawl ministry team has made knitted pocket shawl squares for military families with deployment. On Sept. 11 when the church honored community first responders, a military family became members of the church. Shown (R-L) are Rachael, Daric, Austin and Wiley as they join Spring Hill. Daric deployed to Afghanistan several days after the service.



LEFT: Donna Baes, who attends Maysville UMC, walks with her son, Joey, into the airport where he will fly to Afghanistan.

The Rev. Diane LeBlanc, lead pastor at Maysville, said the church is "intentional about praying twice weekly for 10 named military members and their families, as well as for those serving in the armed forces and their families."



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

November ^{adult} BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

November 6, 2011

Text: Matthew 5:17-26

"Forgiving as God's People"

One thing you have to say about Jesus: Just when you think you have found a way to be as good a person as He expects, He kicks it up a notch.

Getting oneself straightened out in terms of outward actions is a start, but the call of Jesus is also to get oneself straightened out on the inside!

Not just murder is forbidden (Matthew 5:21) but also anger is forbidden (5:22) and also insult is forbidden (5:22) and also name-calling is forbidden (5:22).

I was doing all right with the "murder thing" but then Jesus kicks it up a notch!

Our Lord seems to recognize that there will be times (many times?) when we shall not be able to fulfill righteousness.

Sometimes, our "shadow side" wins. Because Jesus understands that

sometimes we fall short of this call to holy living, He gives us instructions on what to do in such circumstances.

It ties into worship. In the poetic language of the King James Version, the Master says, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 5:23-24, KJV)

It is no accident that the basic order for worship in *The United Methodist Book of Worship* places the "passing of the peace" just before the offering! Be reconciled before presenting your gift!

"...Be reconciled..." There are several words in the language of the New Testament that get translated as some form of "reconcile."

Interestingly, Matthew 5:24 is the only time that the New Testament uses *diállassō*. The word means "to change thoroughly." Come on, Jesus! Can't I change just a little? Come on, Jesus—get real!

Reconciliation is hard work, risky work, and, truth to tell, sometimes

unrequited work.

In these verses there is an echo of the prophet Micah. He speaks of what the Lord might expect in the way of worship, in the way of gifts: burnt offerings, calves a year old, thousands of rams, ten thousands of rivers of oil. No! "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:7-8)

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Gospel of Liberation* (Word), Jürgen Moltmann wrote, "Not until a Christian community consists of the unlike, of the educated and uneducated, of black and white, of the high and the low, will it come to be a witness of hope for the reconciled world of God. Such a community will have difficulty in the divided world...They will be a community under the cross. But we wait for such a community, for only in it lies hope."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Forgiving and reconciling God..."

November 13, 2011

Text: Matthew 5:43-48

"Loving as God's People"

For persons in the Wesleyan tradition, reading Matthew 5:48 is like throwing a steak in front of a hungry dog.

The doctrine of Christian perfection is at the core of teaching for those who come in the theological lineage of John and Charles Wesley.

Perfection? We sing "Pure and spotless let us be (*United Methodist Hymnal* 384, stanza 4)."

Perfection? We sing "A heart in every thought renewed and full of love divine, perfect and right and pure and good, a copy, Lord, of thine (*United Methodist Hymnal* 417, stanza 4)."

Perfection? We sing "...thee, only thee, resolved to know in all that I think or speak of do (*United Methodist Hymnal* 438, stanza 3)."

John Wesley argued that Jesus would not have enjoined us to be "perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) unless He meant it!

It is simply an invitation to love God fully and to love neighbor fully. Isn't that how Jesus answered when asked which commandment in the law was greatest? "Love the Lord your God...and...love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-39)."

What scares us off from making Christian perfection the goal of the Christian journey is our awareness that we shall fail.

Christian perfection does not mean that we shall be without mistake in judgment and behavior. Christian perfection measures the intent of our heart.

In Aramaic—which Jesus probably spoke—there is no word that gets translated "perfection."

The gospel writer understood that the Greek *teleios* came the closest to capturing our Lord's message. *Teleios* carries with it the implication of maturity, of fulfilling purpose, of being complete. The perfection called for here is "perfection in love."

Sometimes another term is used for Christian perfection: entire sanctification.

"Sanctification" is another way of saying "holiness." We are tempted to think that "holiness" is something we achieve, but at our best we remember

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November Adult Bible study continued from page 14

that even holiness is a gift from God.

As Charles Wesley penned: "...hallows whom it first made whole, forms the Savior in the soul (*United Methodist Hymnal* 385, stanza 2)."

Jesus must have known that for most of us it is "loving the enemy" that blocks us from perfect love.

This verse on perfection follows the injunction to "love your enemies."

That becomes possible when, as Paul wrote: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20)."

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection* (Baylor), Edgardo Colón-Emeric writes: "By grace, perfection is attainable in this life, and this perfection is a recognizable sign of God's presence for the church and the world."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "O Perfect Love..."

November 20, 2011

Text: Matthew 6:5-15

"Praying as God's People"

Isn't it funny how something that happened long ago will suddenly show up again in the memory bank?

This happened to me as I read this week's study text.

Jesus said that those who prayed in such ways as to be seen and admired by others "have received their reward (Matthew 6:5)."

In 1955 (or was it '54 or '56?), I attended a national Methodist Youth Fellowship event at Purdue University in LaFayette, Indiana. (Among other things, I remember that as the first time I ever had pizza.) At this meeting, my dorm leader offered to talk with us about any Bible questions we had. I had a question for him: "Why did God reward these hypocrites who did something God did not like?"

After a brief period of staring into space, the counselor said, "God did not reward them. They wanted to be rewarded by what people thought of them and because people thought highly of them, they got what they wanted; they got their reward."

It is easy to make believe that worldly recognition is the equivalent of God's blessing. Those who profess a prosperity gospel certainly come to the precipice of that error. It is tempting to think that good statistics mean a congregation is being faithful. Jesus holds us up to a higher standard: what God "sees in secret (Matthew 6:6)". It can be a bit unnerving to realize that God sees

what is going on in our hearts!

Our Lord teaches what a prayer from the heart could be like. We call it "the Lord's Prayer." It starts with a clear reminder that even when I am in a personal relationship with God, I am not alone. We pray "Our Father". Contrast that with a prayer that recognizes others because we want their attention and praise. Here we recognize others because we share a common Father.

To pray "in secret" is not to pray an isolationist prayer. Note how the Lord's Prayer uses the plural—Our Father, our daily bread, our debts. Note how the Lord's Prayer is concerned about what goes on "on earth as it is in heaven." Note how the Lord's Prayer deals with relationships and forgiveness. All of this to say that going to one's prayer closet does not remove one from community.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Marilynne Robinson's novel *Home* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux) Papa, a dying preacher wanting to give some advice to a renegade son, says "Here I am trying to sort out things I should have seen to forty years ago. Well, just take it as fatherly wisdom, Jack. Prayer is a discipline in truthfulness, in honesty."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name..."

November 27, 2011

Text: Matthew 6:25-34

"Facing Life Without Worry"

This is the First Sunday in Advent. The Church begins the slow walk to Bethlehem. Although the seasonal greeting cards seldom show it, there are many occasions for worry: an unexpected pregnancy, a couple whose love is challenged, a difficult travel from home, no Motel 6 available for sleep, a childbirth with no maternity ward, shepherds who get the fright of their lives, astrologers who get lost trying to follow a star, and before long the effort to slay all young boy babies.

Within this liturgical context of the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany season, there comes this study lesson in which Jesus says "Do not worry."

The King James Version says, "Take no thought..." The New English Bible says "Put away anxious thoughts".

Ronald Knox translates "Do not fret..." Eugene Peterson in *The Message* offers "Don't fuss about (it)..." and "Don't get worked up about (it)..."

The literal translation of the Synodale Le Nouveau Testament is "Don't put on a care..." The Santa Biblia translation literally says, "Don't get preoccupied..."

Look back over those renditions of Matthew 6:25 and 6:34.

Most of us will find ourselves listed there at least once!

Stephen Rettenmayer reports some interesting statistics about worry: 40 percent of our anxieties never happen; 30 percent are about the past that cannot be changed; 12 percent of worry is about criticisms from others usually not true; 10 percent of anxiety is about health, which only gets worse with stress and worry. That leaves 8 percent—real problems that must be faced.

Matthew 6:33-34 offers a clue for facing those real problems. Put your focus on kingdom values. Put your emphasis on holiness, holy living. And live in the moment.

These days moving toward the full holiday threaten us with numerous occasions for worry: gift selection, broken relationships, hectic schedules, loneliness.

Life can be full and life can be empty. Matthew 6:25-34 seems to fit.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Rick Warren (*The Purpose-Driven Life*, Zondervan) writes: "When you think about a problem over

and over in your mind, that's called worry. When you think about God's Word over and over in your mind, that's meditation. If you know how to worry, you already know how to meditate!...Worry is the warning light that God has been shoved to the sidelines."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Peace Who passes understanding..."

A PERSONAL NOTE

With the November Adult Bible Studies, I shall have completed ten years of preparing these comments for the *North Carolina Conference Christian Advocate*.

This has been more fun than one should have with a Bible and a computer keyboard!

There have been well over 500 of these lessons.

Interestingly, the Sunday School class of which I am a part does not use the Adult Bible Studies, so I count on those of you who do to let me know when I fumble the ball and when there is an occasional touchdown.

If the Lord is willing (and the creek don't rise), next week we'll start our eleventh year together.

I look forward to spending that time with you.

CLASSIFIEDS

HOLDEN BEACH Ocean Front Condo – Pray, meditate and enjoy the beautiful view of the ocean from the covered porch of this two bedroom two bath condo (WiFi provided). Pastors and others in ministry receive a special off-season rate of \$425 per week (\$150 savings) from November through March. Contact Hobbs Realty (800) 655-3367 and refer to this ad to reserve "Our Beach Blessing" (Sea Oats Villas #106).

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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar
ANNOUNCEMENTS
 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Four October dates for required clergy Safe Sanctuaries training

Four workshops will be offered to provide clergy information and support for their role in implementing Safe Sanctuary policy in the local church. The curriculum is designed for pastors who may find themselves in the challenging role of providing pastoral care for persons affected by abuse or protecting one falsely accused; they may have to enforce a policy or provide interpretation to the congregation as to the need for a policy.

Four Safe Sanctuaries training events are scheduled, and clergy may choose the one most convenient in terms of date or location. The content of every workshop is the same and each meets from 9am-12noon.

Every pastor under appointment is expected to attend one of the workshops and should register for one of the following workshops: Oct. 3 - Haymount UMC in Fayetteville, Oct. 17 - Covenant UMC in Greenville, Oct. 22 - Millbrook UMC, Raleigh (make-up date), and Oct. 31 - Methodist Building in Garner.

Register online at <http://nccumc.org/safe-sanctuaries-training-for-clergy/>.

Kings Dominion Fall Family Fun Days Support Youth Service Fund

Discount tickets for Kings Dominion are available to NC Conference United Methodist Church groups for Oct. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, and 29. In addition to the savings of \$28+ in the admission price, a rebate of \$1.00 is offered to Youth Service Fund for each regular ticket redeemed.

The flyer with information on how to purchase tickets online or by phone is online at <http://nccumc.org/youth/files/KingsDominionflyerFall2011.pdf>.

When purchasing tickets by phone, mention "NC Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church" to receive the discount. Please note - tickets are *not* available at the Methodist Building as in years past.

The Trail of Hope: The Power of Native American Women - Oct. 7-9

SEJANAM and Lake Junaluska will host the second Native Women's Gathering and Conference Oct. 7-9. The conference will focus on capacity building, sharing strategies, and tapping into the leadership capabilities of Native American women to strengthen their communities and churches. Come and hear the hopeful stories of women who have impacted their communities for the greater good. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/native-american-women/> or call 828-454-6656.

Clergy lunch on immigration at Shaw Divinity School - Oct. 8

The NC Council of Churches is continuing the statewide series of "Clergy Lunches" on immigration. These events are geared towards busy religious professionals and faith leaders, and provide an overview of immigration issues.

To date, over 500 NC clergy and faith leaders have participated in this series. The next event will be Saturday, Oct. 8 from 12-1:30 p.m. at Shaw Divinity School in Raleigh. To help the facilitators make appropriate lunch arrangements, register at <http://www.nccouncilofchurches.org/2011/08/clergy-lunch-on-immigration-raleigh/>.

Mathison to lead discussion at Louisburg College - Oct. 10

John Ed Mathison will lead a discussion, "Best Practices in Church Leadership" at Louisburg College on Oct. 10. The event will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude around 3 p.m. and is free. CEUs are available for a fee.

The event is co-sponsored by Louisburg College and the Raleigh and Rocky Mount districts but is open to everyone. Because lunch will be provided, the college requests that persons planning to attend RSVP. For more information, go to http://www.louisburg.edu/clergy_invite.pdf.

GBOD to sponsor Wesleyan Leadership Conference - Oct. 13-15

The second annual Wesleyan Leadership Conference, which will bring together people who want to be more missional in their ministry like the original Methodist movement, is scheduled for Oct. 13-15 in Nashville, TN. Speakers will include the Rev. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan leadership at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship; and the Rev. Elaine Heath, the McCreless assistant professor of evangelism at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. For registration information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/wesleyan-leadership>.

Worship and Song workshop rescheduled - Oct. 15

The Worship & Song workshop has been rescheduled for Saturday, Oct. 15 at White Plains UMC, 313 SE Maynard Ave. in Cary. Sponsored by Cokesbury and NCC Fellowship of United Methodist UMMWA, this workshop explores using the newest hymnal resource.

Registration and coffee begin at 8:30 a.m. The event begins at 9 a.m. and ends with worship from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Cost is \$15 per person and includes a copy of the Singer's Edition and a continental breakfast. For questions call Stephanie at Cokesbury Raleigh—866.865.8665 (toll free). To register, send registration form and a check (made out to NCC FUMMW) for \$15 to: Mark Gourley, 306 Maplewood Dr., Goldsboro, NC 27534.

DBOM Cross and Key Banquet - Oct. 20 in Raleigh

On Thursday, Oct. 20, from 7-9 p.m., The Cross and Key Banquet for Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) will be held at Edenton Street United Methodist Church in Raleigh. For this event, includes a dinner, a presentation by Christian speaker and comedian the Rev. Andy Lambert, and a live auction to support the DBOM ministry. The Cross and Key Award for outstanding volunteer service will be presented during the evening.

Reservations may be made online at: http://disciplebibleoutreach.org/events_training/2011_cross_and_key_banquet_registration/.

Laity Session of Christian Witness Academy to be held Oct. 20-22

Practical tools for evangelism in communities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the emphasis of the Commission on Evangelism's 2011 Academy of Christian Witness laity session. The session will be held Oct. 20-22 at Camp Rockfish in Parkton. Advanced registration is required. The fee is \$25.00 and acceptance is on a first come- first served basis. For information write or call the Rev. Carol Dean at (910) 567-6116 or email her at caroldean@nccumc.org.

"Share the game, Share your faith" UMM Duke Day - Oct. 22

Duke Day, a community outreach event sponsored by NC Conference United Methodist Men, will be held on the Duke University campus on Oct. 22.

The "Share the Game, Share your Faith" event will be held at the Duke

calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Share the Game" continued from page 16

Divinity School Chapel and includes a ticket to the Duke vs. Wake Forest football game. Local UMM units are encouraged to reach out to local youth groups to sponsor their participation in this event. Planned activities are: worship and music, tailgate lunch, and the football game. The speaker for this event is Rod Propes. A veteran vocalist with over 20 years of experience, Propes will share his life experiences through testimony and song. Cost of the event is \$20 per person and includes event, lunch, and game ticket. The starting time for the event and game time will be announced later. Updates will be posted under Events at nccumc.org. Register by Oct. 19. For registration and questions, contact Ricky Hines at 919-772-2383, or by email at rgmhines@bellsouth.net. Mail a check, made payable to NC United Methodist Men, to: 1402 Claymore Drive, Garner, NC 27529. For sponsorship information, contact William Green, First UMC Cary, at (919) 467-1861 or wgreen@fumc-cary.org.

5th Annual Great Pumpkin Race to benefit DBOM - Oct. 22

The 5th annual Great Pumpkin Race to benefit DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries will be Oct. 22, with the gathering to be at Jamestown UMC, (403 E. Main St., Jamestown, 27282 www.jumc.org). There will be events and fun activities for all ages. The 5K run will take off at 8:30 a.m. and the one mile walk will begin at 8:45 a.m. There will be a prize for the runner in the best Halloween costume and relay races and games for the younger crowd. Following the run there will be refreshments, a drawing for door prizes and an Awards Ceremony. To register, go to <http://www.disciplebibleoutreach.org/>.

2011 Peace Conference focuses on poverty - Nov. 13-15

The 2011 Peace Conference, "Poverty, Abundance, and Peace: Seeking Economic Justice for All God's Children" explores world economic systems and how they impact peace, poverty and hunger. For information on the Peace Conference and to register, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/peace. The conference will be held Nov. 13-15. The gathering features Senator and former presidential candidate George McGovern; David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; and Bishop Nkula Ntambo of the Katanga Conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo. An interfaith panel will discuss the topic, "Our Sacred Texts Speak to Us in Regard to Peace, Justice and Economics."

Faith & military service workshop at Duke Divinity School - Nov. 11-12

A workshop entitled 'After the Yellow Ribbon' will be hosted at Duke Divinity School on Nov. 11-12 to discuss faith and military service. The gathering is designed to stimulate conversation between the church, military and academic communities so that all might approach service members and veterans as human beings, and more fully understand and heal the unseen wounds of war (including PTSD and moral injury).

Registration is \$20 for military service members and veterans, \$25 for students, and \$35 for the general public. Registration includes all conference events, lunch on Saturday, and a ticket to a concert by Derek Webb on Saturday evening. Tickets may be purchased for the concert only for \$10. Registration and information are online at <http://divinity.duke.edu/after-the-yellow-ribbon>.

Submitting Calendar Announcements

Submit Calendar Announcements for possible use in the NC Conference's weekly News Briefs emails and in the *NCCC Advocate* by emailing communications@nccumc.org. It is highly recommended that items be submitted a minimum of eight weeks before the event's registration deadline. Laity and clergy can also subscribe to News Briefs by emailing the address above.

Conference offering church treasurer/finance training - Dec. 3

Local church treasurer and finance committee training will be held on Saturday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the United Methodist Building in Garner. Local church finance basics will be covered as well as updates from recent legislative changes. Local church treasurers, finance committee members and pastors are encouraged to attend.

Seats are limited so registration is required. There will be a \$10 registration fee charged to help offset the cost of training materials and lunch. To register, please contact the Conference Treasurer's Office at 800-849-4433 or kwilder@nccumc.org.

conference CALENDAR

October

9/30-10/2 Dads, Lads and Gals camp, Camp Rockfish

1 Sweet Dreams Fundraising Dinner for NC Camps

1 Gathering of Associate Members, Local Pastors, and Lay Speakers, Garner UMC 9 a.m.

2 World Communion Sunday

3 Safe Sanctuaries Training for Clergy at FA: Haymount UMC 9 a.m. - noon

7-9 Boy Scout weekend at Camp Rockfish

8 Conference UMW Annual Meeting, Methodist University, Fayetteville

10 Best Practices in Church Leadership, Louisburg College, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

10-11 Convocation & Pastors' School, Duke Divinity School

15 Worship and Song Workshop, White Plains UMC, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

17 Call Retreat, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Durham

17 Safe Sanctuaries Training for Clergy at GR: Covenant UMC 9 a.m. - noon

17 CCT Meeting, 10 a.m.

20 Cross and Key Banquet for Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, Edenton St. UMC, 7-9 p.m.

20-22 Commission on Evangelism's Laity Session of Christian Witness, Camp Rockfish

22 Safe Sanctuaries Training for Clergy at RA: Millbrook UMC 9 a.m. - noon

22 5th Annual Great Pumpkin Run to benefit Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, 8:30 a.m., Jamestown UMC

28-30 Girl Scout weekend at Camp Rockfish

31 Safe Sanctuaries Training for Clergy at UM Building, Garner, 9 a.m.- noon

November

4-6 Camp Don Lee volunteer work weekend

5 Conference UMW DO-IT-DAY

8 Paying Attention to the Leader in Leadership, Edenton St. UMC, 9 am. - 3 p.m.

11 - 13 Pilgrimage, Crown Center, Fayetteville

13 - 15 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference

18-20 UMW Leadership Training Event

19 5K Family Fun Run, Camp Chestnut Ridge

27 UM Student Day Special Sunday

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

around the CONFERENCE



Oak Grove UMC - Durham District

Members of the Ceffo Volunteer Fire Department, part of the Oak Grove UMC community, were honored by the church for the daily challenges they face as members of the community remembered their peers who served in New York and Washington D.C. 10 years ago on Sept. 11.

16 first responders arrived for worship in three fire trucks, in their dress uniforms. They were each given a New Testament and a small gift. A "love offering" was taken for the Ceffo firefighters. Some of the firefighters are shown with the Rev. Pam Watkins (third from left), pastor of Oak Grove UMC.



Evergreen UMC - Wilmington District

As part of mission outreach in the community, Evergreen UMC (Wilmington District) gave 20 school supply kits to the Evergreen Elementary School on Aug. 22. Each teacher received a kit worth \$360 to help with their class. Attached to each kit was a letter signed by members of the church, expressing how important it is for the church to reach out and to help the school during this time of economic burdens. Shown are some of the church members presenting the kits to teachers. The Rev. Dr. Milford Oxendine, Jr., the church pastor, is standing at the back of the group.



Greater Heights UMC - Raleigh District

Greater Heights UMC in Clayton joined two other groups to distribute over 500 backpacks filled with school supplies, 750 basketballs, and feed over 1,000 people in a community block party in the name of Christ.

Partnering with Greater Heights for the event were Passage Home, an anti-poverty agency based in Raleigh, and Grifols, principally a producer of blood plasma-based products with a plant in Clayton.

North Carolina Conference of Christians
ADVOCATE

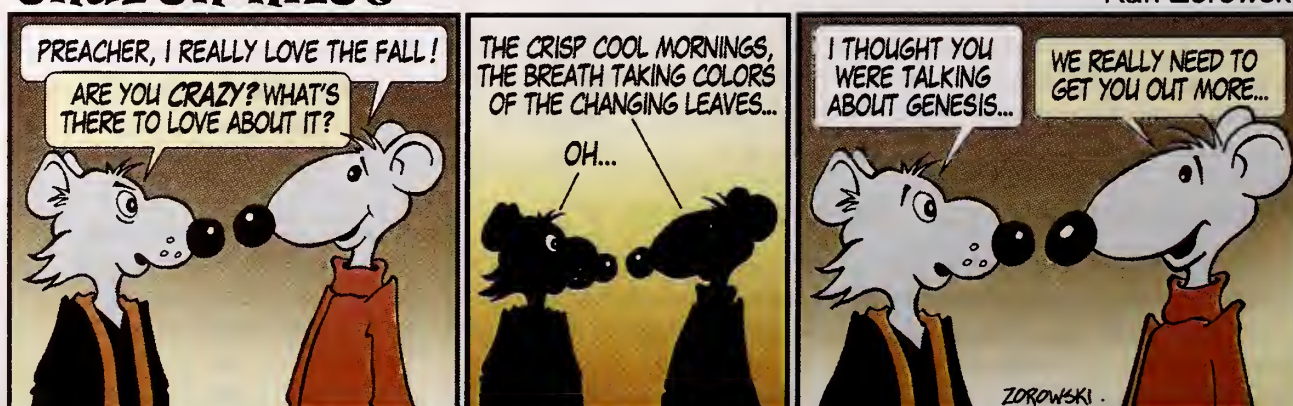
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Karl Zorowski



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Highland UMC

- Raleigh District

The Highland UMC Community Garden donated over 1000 pounds of produce to "Plant a Row for the Hungry."

In addition to growing produce in their own garden, the team, under the leadership of Cullen Whitley, has assisted with the launch of 15 other gardens.

In this photo, some of the gardening team display samples of produce grown in the Community Garden.



Spring Hill UMC

- Fayetteville District

Community first responders (firemen, EMT's, and sheriff's department) were honored by Spring Hill UMC, Lillington, during worship service on Sept. 11. Pastor at Spring Hill is the Rev. Terry M. Williams.

North Carolina Conference Christian
ADVOCATE

Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org.

The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication.

All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats.

Articles and photos must be sent in separate files; photos cannot be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.

See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

DEATHS

BOSTICK, Joseph K., (Raleigh district retired elder) died Aug. 26. A Service of Death and Resurrection was held Sept. 3, at Edenton Street UMC.

BRANDENBURG, Lucille P., widow of the Rev. F. Barden Brandenburg, died Sept. 14. A memorial service was held Sept. 24 at Parsons Grove UMC in Candor.

JOYNER, Louise V. (Toni), wife of Belton Joyner (Durham

district retired) died Sept. 21. A Service of Death and Resurrection was held Sept. 24 at Bethany UMC in Durham.

MCCALL, Blanche Heaton, widow of the Rev. Emmitt McCall died Aug. 17. A funeral service was conducted on Aug. 19 in South Carolina.

OWEN, Patricia Smith, widow of the Rev. J. Malloy Owen III died Aug. 9. A funeral service was held at St. Mark's UMC in Raleigh on Aug. 15.

SHELTON, Robert Edward (Burlington district: Mount Hermon) died Sept. 20. The funeral service was held Sept. 23 at Smyrna UMC in Robbins. A Service of Remembrance was held Sept. 25, at Mt. Hermon UMC in Graham.

WILLIAMS, William F., (Sanford district retired elder serving Pinebluff,) died Sept. 12. A service celebrating his life was held Sept. 16 at Pinebluff UMC.

New resources available from

For churches:

UMCOM.ORG/
RETHINKCHURCH

For visitors:

10THOUSAND
DOORS.ORG

RETHINK CHURCH®

Thrive! Living the Life - 4-week church study offered

Doctors say that, by taking care of ourselves, lifespans can be extended. But, what good is a longer life if it doesn't have meaning and purpose? What does it mean to thrive?

Thrive! is a four-week series that will challenge participants physically and spiritually to live a vital life in world community.

Through applied principles, explore new perspectives on why each individual matters. The four-week series helps participants understand why taking care of the self is not just a good thing for the individual...it's good for others.

Thrive! is developed by Rethink Church in cooperation with Imagine No Malaria. Local church health improvement activities are offered hand-in-hand with opportunities to improve the lives of those in Africa who are most vulnerable to malaria.

With Thrive!, not only can participants improve the health of their individual bodies, they can improve the health of Christ's Body in the world today.

This thematic series for worship, study and churchwide activities is free and available for download. This includes the adult study series, supplements for children and for youth, and a graphics catalog.

In addition, lyrics and chords for "Thrive," a song written by Laurie McHugh, are available online.

To supplement the series, the "Thrive!" multimedia bundle (\$25) includes:

- ♦ 8 Worship/Bible Study videos and a trailer showing how faithful Christians are getting fit and helping others
- ♦ Illustrations, presentation graphics and bulletin covers
- ♦ Direct mail, door hangers, newspaper ads and invitation card artwork to invite others to join in.

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/thrive-study> to download resources and order the multimedia bundle.

For questions, contact rethink-church@umcom.org or call 1-877-281-6535.

As the next evolution of the "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." welcoming and advertising campaign, RETHINK CHURCH seeks to demonstrate to the world that faith in Christ is active and that church is not an event, but rather a way of life. The campaign asks: "What if church were a verb?"

Coordinated by United Methodist Communications, the campaign is designed to reach seekers while supporting the UMC's four areas of focus: Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally; Engaging in ministry with the poor; Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations; and Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

"Outside the Box" Advent sermon series now available

Rethink Church has released an Advent sermon series titled "Outside the Box". The series invites Christians to unwrap anew the story of Jesus' birth.

It includes a video, sermon starters, an Advent wreath-lighting liturgy, youth/young adult small group resources as well as children and family activities.

The series also offers adaptive tips for including those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

These are available for free download. The multimedia bundle includes promotional materials, video and graphics for \$25.

For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/rethink2011>.

CHANGE THE WORLD

Start planning now for 2012 "Change the World" weekend

Change the World is a movement to connect United Methodists across the world in service on May 19-20, 2012 both locally and globally.

In 2011, this annual event brought United Methodist in 15 countries together to take action as God's hands and feet in over 2,000 events.

Churches planning 2012 events, can register their events to be

featured in the online map hosted on the Change the World website. Visit www.umcom.org/changetheworld for more information.

Online resources which will be updated in early 2012 event include project planning tools, a promotional video, sermon starters, Bible study series for all ages, media promotion tools and project ideas.

Churches asked to maintain their Find-A-Church profile

Find-A-Church allows churches to introduce themselves to the community. By keeping the church's profile current, seekers will more easily find and connect with a church.

The Find-A-Church profile serves as a powerful online tool for evangelism. Connect via the web with busy people in the community on their terms, on their time and in their comfort zone.

The Rethink Church ad campaign sends visitors to the website 10ThousandDoors.org. Through this interactive media website, seekers can find a church matching their interests and preferences.

Churches with out-of-date information mean that seekers will not learn much about the church and the "doors" that can lead

them to a congregation.

Find-A-Church has almost 35,000 UM Church profiles gaining more than 12,000 page views daily. When churches keep their Find-A-Church profile current, they can:

- ♦ Welcome visitors personally to the congregation.
- ♦ Display the church's ministries and activities.
- ♦ Introduce members.
- ♦ List worship schedules.
- ♦ Link to the church's Web site for a closer look.

Learn about maximizing a church's Find-A-Church profile by visiting www.umcom.org/rethink-church and selecting Get Involved. A PDF and video are available to guide churches through updating their profile.

New package helps churches explore immigration issues

Immigration issues are a frequent topic in today's political landscape, yet people of faith often steer clear of this subject. Rethink Church has developed a package to help church communities explore immigration issues.

The multimedia package includes videos, graphics, and a study guide.

A 12-minute video tells the story of Jasmine - a 17-year old who was left alone in the U.S. after her parents deported. The video seeks to personalize an often-dehumanized issue to see how one group of United Methodists responded.

A guide to conversation is

included, which helps leaders plan for a dialogue session to follow a video screening. An invitation package provides graphic resources to help churches extend the conversation to surrounding community.

Multimedia resources may be downloaded for free online at <http://tinyurl.com/download-immigration>.

The package can also be ordered as a DVD which is free except for the cost of shipping. Order online at <http://tinyurl.com/rethink-immigration>.

For questions, contact rethink-church@umcom.org or call 1-877-281-6535.



**World
AIDS Day
Resources**
Page 20

NB7c

CCT discusses disciple-making and Wesleyan Way

By Bill Norton *

With an emphasis on visioning, the North Carolina Conference Connectional Table (CCT), meeting Oct. 17 looked at disciple-making systems, discussed ways to make the conference vision clearer, and considered how the table could best assist local churches with disciple making.

Chris Harman, coordinator of the Conference Christian Formation Team, presented an overview of disciple-making systems used by a variety of churches and general operating principles of systems.

Quoting a source from Pegasus Communications, she said systems are defined as "a group of interacting, interrelated, and interdependent components that form a complex and unified whole."

Those systems, she continued, have a specific purpose and all parts of the system must be present and arranged in a specific way for the system to be fully functioning. Systems change as a response to feedback, which in turn, helps maintain stability.

The mission of the local

church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

A way churches can fulfill that mission is through a system of reaching out to receive people, relating them to God through Christ, nurturing faith development, and sending them into the world as faithful disciples who continue the cycle, Harman explained.

A model of a disciple-making system, developed by Dan Glover and Claudia Lavy in their book "Deepening Your Effectiveness," was shared with the CCT as an example of an effective system that can be applied to churches of any size.

Glover and Lavy developed the "Discipleship Pathway" to move people through activities of inviting, instructing, relating, and serving as a means of developing their discipleship to maturity, Harman said.

Harman concluded her presentation by citing paragraph 601 in the 2008 Discipline that states "the

purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God."

After the presentation, CCT members met in small groups to discuss several topics, including how the conference vision statement, "Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in Every Place Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World," could be presented in a way that is clear and assists the local church in disciple-making.

Included in comments from the discussion groups was that the CCT had been effective in bringing a broad range of leaders to the table for discussion and budget consolidation but it had not been as effective in sharing the vision and how United

See "Disciple-making," pg 2



Grace Hackney, center, said she thought the CCT had reached a place where the members built trust and could be honest with each other and hold each other accountable. The problem she pointed out was how it gets translated into the local church. To Hackney's left is Paul Lee and to her right is Gary Locklear. (Photo by Bill Norton)



While hundreds of United Methodists, including a team from St. Marks UMC in Murfreesboro, Tenn., have responded to needs in eastern NC, much remains to be done.

NC residents still praying for help after hurricane and tornado

Be the answer to the prayers of those whose homes need cleanup and repair or replacement. As the Hurricane Irene Recovery begins to move from early response and cleanup into repair and rebuilding, conference disaster response centers needs volunteers to mud out homes and repair what is left.

Both skilled and licensed construction help and those who work really hard are necessary to restore lives in eastern NC. In addition to these opportunities, conference disaster response continues to have work in Sanford for tornado repairs.

Volunteer for a day, a weekend or a week or more at Oriental, Aurora, Swan Quarter, Wanchese and the Outer Banks. Housing is available at each location including sleeping quarters, kitchens and showers.

For scheduling or for questions, call the Conference Disaster Response Call Center at 888-440-9167. Financial donations may be made through the conference website, nccumc.org. Click on the Hurricane Relief box on the home page. Donations may also be made by placing a check, designated for NC Storm Response (#S-00176).

UMCOR ships nearly 238,000 relief kits in recent months

During the months of August and September, the United Methodist Committee on Relief's relief-supply network shipped nearly 238,000 relief kits worldwide.

That total included thousands of cleaning buckets shipped to communities in North Carolina, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire in response to fierce storms in the late summer that caused unprecedented flooding. Donations to Material Resource Ministry, UMCOR Advance #901440 support this work.

As part of the response to Hurricane Irene, the Mission Response Center in Terrel, NC (Western NC Conference), delivered its entire cleaning bucket inventory to the NC Conference. The buckets were distributed immediately as the delivery truck was still being unloaded.

PERIODICALS

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Disciple-making

continued from page 1

Methodists are connectional with each part working with and supporting the other.

A large portion of the sharing from groups related to what is sometimes referred to as the Wesleyan Way of utilizing small groups and accountability. In addition, there were comments that local churches were more effective with discipleship with young people through Confirmation but less so with adults.

"When did we step away from the Wesleyan Way of making disciples? We don't really understand the Wesleyan model and how we live in accountability with each other," said the Rev. Judy Stephens.

"Our focus on making disciples is good but we are not proactive on birthing folks who are new disciples," said the Rev. Sam Loy. "People are not spiritually mature. Getting folks saved is just the starting point."

"This is really significant stuff for us to share from our hearts and not just from our heads. I hear us talking about a delivery system," said Bishop Al Gwinn after listening to reports from the morning discussion groups.

CCT members formed into discussions groups in the afternoon to discuss questions such as "What is God showing us that we haven't been able to see until this point?", "How do we help each other with the concept of change and transition?", and "What are the barriers that keep us from letting some things go?"



Break-out discussion groups during the CCT meeting talked about specific topics and then made reports to the full table. Around the table shown, beginning on the left are Tim Reaves, Judy Stephens, Carol Dean, Carol Goehring, Landis Barber, and Chuck Cook.

Bishop Gwinn summarized some of the sharing following the afternoon discussions and then asked, "How do we get from a place in conversation to doing what is being discussed?"

He then offered a suggestion that part of the group's strategy could be a delivery system "for our colleagues on the front line." He urged the group to "stick a fork in something" and move from discussion to the practical, referring to a system of disciple-making.

"We will be criticized for selecting something but the system should be something that will come along side of congregations with suggestions on how to win new disciples and move people through catechism," he said.

He was referring to the teachings of the beliefs of faith to all ages in other denominations when he referred to catechism. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is often called the

"Four Pillars" of the Faith. They are: Profession of Faith (Apostle's Creed), Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Baptism, Holy Communion), Life in Christ (including Ten Commandments), and Christian Prayer (including Lord's Prayer).

United Methodists, he explained, use the word "Confirmation" for youth, usually 11-14-years-of-age, where they learn about the meaning of the Christian faith, the history and teachings of The United Methodist Church, and an explanation of the baptismal and membership vows they will be professing. Adults, especially those new to a local church, rarely have the same instruction.

Sensing the group wanted to take another step beyond talking, Bishop Gwinn suggested that Emily Innes, the CCT chair, call together a number of CCT leaders and conference staff to put a draft together about what such a disciple-making system

might look like.

During a time of sharing Bishop Gwinn said the Transition Team for eight new conference districts had four sub-committees discussing possibilities for team consideration.

"It is only speculation if you have heard about some decision that has been made," he said. "The Transition Team has made no decision on recommendations or suggestions and until they make a decision anything you hear is speculation."

In other action, the CCT approved a policy on reimbursements for persons attending events.

The focus on the next three CCT meetings will be on strategic planning, budget, and evaluation.

* Bill Norton is conference director of Communications and Advocate editor.

The Wesleyan Way / UM Way

An overview of the meaning of the Wesleyan Way

Covenant Discipleship

- Accountability in small group ministries that empower and support lay leaders in congregations.
- Group accountability requires an explanation of a person's conduct, duties, and spiritual practice. The aim is support and mutual growth in faith, not judgment.

Means of Grace - Wesley's guide for a life of faithful discipleship. It includes:

- Works of Piety—prayer, worship, the Lord's Supper, Scripture, and fasting or abstinence and
- Works of Mercy—feeding the hungry, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the prisoners, faith sharing, peace-making

Practicing the UM Way - Living the Christian life in covenant with Christ and one another. "A Rule of Life":

- Do no harm, avoid evil of every kind (examples: Taking God's name in vain; Drunkenness; Fighting, quarreling, brawling, returning evil for evil; and Doing what we know is not for the glory of God)
- Doing good as often and as many times as far as possible: (examples— giving food to the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting or helping the sick or in prison)
- Following the Means of Grace: Regular worship attendance, Private and family prayer, Bible reading and study, The Supper of the Lord (Holy Communion), and Fasting or abstinence.

Small Groups

- Small group ministries for leaders and participants. Primary mission is faith formation and disciple-making, and
- Understanding the whole church as a system or connection with many groups working to fulfill the ministry of the whole church as a result of what happens in the various groups. Includes "A Rule of Life" in Practicing the UM Way

Responding to World Events

- Discipleship through acts of compassion and justice. (Including drought, famine, earthquakes, tsunami, terrorism, violence, scandal, war, and poverty)

Taken in part from *Living The United Methodist Way* on GBOD.ORG, and *Small Groups & Accountability: The Wesleyan Way of Christian Formation* by Steven W. Manskar (search by title on GBOD.ORG)

Training opportunity

Disciple-making is NOT a program

"Disciple-making is NOT a program," a training event for laity and clergy, is being presented Friday, Jan. 13 and on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012 at the UM Building in Garner.

The training opportunity offers a look at small groups, a core element in Wesleyan DNA and how John Wesley used the small group system for discipleship.

It examines how the system can be utilized in today's church as a means of making and growing disciples. Dr. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan Leadership for The General Board of Discipleship, is the trainer.

The cost is \$15 per person for one session. Lunch is included. Online registration starts in November.

District Transition Team forms sub-committees

The Transition Team for forming eight new districts in the North Carolina Conference named four sub-committees to assist in the work with various aspects of the move from 12 to eight districts. Recommendations from the sub-committees will be considered by the Transition Team before final decisions are made.

"Whatever you have heard about final decisions that have been made is speculation," Bishop Al Gwinn told the Conference Connectional Table during their Oct. 17 meeting. "There are sub-committees that are working on items for Transition Team consideration but no final decisions have been made."

"Determined to live with specific values as it works, the Transition Team has a commitment to prayer, to openness and new ideas, listening to local churches and clergy, and consulting beyond the annual conference," Bishop Gwinn said.

He further said that under the new district plan, district superintendents will be in the field four to five days a week among the local churches, determining the best form of coaching strategies. The superintendents will also help congregations understand the vision of making disciples and empowered to embrace the Wesleyan Way and to build effective teams, Bishop Gwinn said.

Bishop Gwinn plans to name the eight district superintendents by mid-January 2012.

The sub-committees, announced by the Rev. Linda Taylor, Transition Team chair, are District lines, Leadership, Property, and Vision.

The Lines sub-committee is working with Bishop Gwinn and the Cabinet on the new district lines and names of the districts. New districts are based on population and

potential for growth moving into 2015. The sub-committee is planning to finalize its recommendations on district names and lines no later than Jan. 1, 2012.

Working with lay and clergy on the transition from 12 to eight districts is the Leadership sub-committee. Discussions have been held with the Conference Board of Laity on a timeline to receive feedback for making the transition for United Methodist Women, men, and youth, as well as lay speaking directors, and district lay leaders. District superintendents are presenting a "pool of leaders," both laypersons and clergy, who could serve effectively on district committees.

"The plan is to have a list of possible leaders for eight districts to the Cabinet by Jan. 26, 2012," said Rev. Taylor.

"The Leadership sub-committee will also post position and hiring notices for assistants to district superintendents," Taylor said. "The committee will hold interviews and choose two or three qualified finalists for each of the eight districts."

Under the time-line, assistants to the district superintendents will be named by April, trained in May and June for a July 1 start date.

Responsibility for the Property sub-committee is the transfer of property and assets, equity of district work fund calculations, disposition of currently owned parsonages that are no longer needed, and relocation of district offices that are currently in district parsonages.

"The Vision sub-committee will provide learning opportunities and

support for district superintendents as they move in a new superintendency roll," said Taylor. "In addition, they will provide learning opportunities for clergy and laity as they too learn to work with the new district model and will assist in training the new assistants to the district superintendents."

"The Transition Team thanks everyone who responded to the 'five questions' on the on-line survey. Your thoughts and ideas were extremely

important as the team began their work," Taylor said.

"Be assured that every comment made was read by the team and given serious consideration. We continue to ask for your prayers as we go about completing the work before us. We are confident that this new way will bring renewed energy and excitement across every part of the North Carolina Conference and most importantly will honor the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ."

First UMC, Pembroke receives grant for youth program

Directors of the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) awarded \$291,583 in Ethnic Local Church and Human Relations Day grants at its fall meeting. First UMC in Pembroke was presented one of the grants, the only one awarded in North Carolina.

The Ethnic Local Church Grants program is to strengthen congregations through education, advocacy or leadership development for social justice engagement. Grants are awarded twice each year.

Human Relations Day offerings in local churches make the grants possible. GBCS distributes 10% of Human Relations Day receipts for youth-offender ministries. The General Board of Global Ministries distributes the remainder for its United Methodist Voluntary Services and Youth Rehabilitation programs.

Ten thousand dollars was awarded to First UMC, Pembroke, for a program entitled "Developing Youth Leadership for Social Change through Community Service."

The congregation is 95% Native American and includes Sacred Pathways Crisis Ministries. Building on relationships with Robeson County high schools, this project focuses on mentoring and strengthening relationships between youths of different races and ethnicities.

Robeson County is ethnically diverse, with Native Americans in the majority. The outreach will also include students who are African American, Hispanic and other ethnicities.

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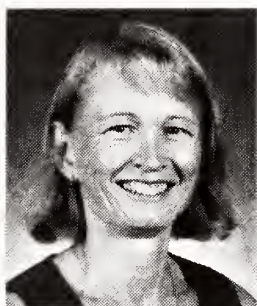
Duke UM chaplain and Wesley Fellowship receive national awards

The National Campus Ministry Association recognized Duke University's United Methodist chaplain and the Duke Wesley Fellowship, United Methodist Campus Ministry, with the organization's top two awards during the association's 2011 annual conference at the University of California Berkeley.

Dr. Jennifer E. Copeland, United Methodist chaplain for Duke University and executive director of the Duke Wesley Fellowship, was recognized for Outstanding Ministry in Education. The Duke Wesley Fellowship received the award for 2010 Campus Ministry of the Year.

It's fairly rare for both awards to go to the same location and not only did Duke receive these awards, but Copeland was noted as the committee's "unanimous" selection.

Copeland, a three-time graduate of Duke University, has worked as Duke's United Methodist chaplain since 1999. Before returning to Duke, Copeland served as a pastor in South Carolina and as the United Methodist chaplain for Furman University and Converse College.



Jennifer Copeland

The Duke Wesley Fellowship is a campus unit of The United Methodist Church. Students meet regularly during the week for worship, service, and fellowship. Their primary worship gatherings are Wesley Worship each Sunday evening and Weekly Eucharist each Wednesday afternoon.

In her nomination letter for Copeland, the Rev. Nancy Ferree-Clark, formerly the associate dean of Duke Chapel, senior pastor of the Congregation at Duke Chapel, and currently senior pastor of Federal Way UMC near Tacoma, WA, wrote of the wealth of

opportunities the Duke Wesley Fellowship offers for community building, faith development, and mission outreach.

"I [have seen] many talented, highly committed campus ministers come and go. I cannot think of any others who could match the standards set by Jennifer Copeland in her ministry with the Wesley Fellowship at Duke University," Ferree-Clark said.

Speaking about the award received by the Wesley Fellowship, Copeland said, "This award is especially significant for college students who receive so many competing narratives about what is important during this time in their lives. Students of the Duke Wesley Fellowship have gone forthrightly about the work of responding to God's grace for almost 30 years on the Duke campus, in the surrounding community, and across the world, usually with little fanfare."

The National Campus Ministry Association is a professional organization educating, encouraging, and equipping those engaged in the practice of ministry in higher education. Organized almost 50 years ago, membership is open to anyone engaged in ministry on a college campus, full or part-time, clergy or laity. Core values of the association include promoting integrity, ethics, and accountability, supporting communities defined by ecumenism, professional and spiritual growth, and honoring the intellectual enterprise.

Opportunities to learn more about the Duke Wesley Fellowship can be accessed online at: <http://sites.duke.edu/wesley/>.



Spring Hill UMC, Lillington, was one of the UM churches nationwide that held DREAM Sabbath observances from Sept. 16-Oct. 9. The congregation, led by the Rev. Terry Williams, heard about the DREAM Act from former US Representative Bob Etheridge. He offered remarks on the importance of adoption of the act, calling it a "non-partisan education bill, not a bill regarding immigration."

Pastors present DREAM Act for information during worship

By Kathy L. Gilbert *

When the Rev. Mary Ellen Finegan of Central United Methodist Church in Fairmont, W. Va. stood up to preach on a Sunday in late September, she knew her message would be controversial with some members.

She spoke in support of the DREAM Act ("The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act"), a bipartisan bill that would provide a path to citizenship for some undocumented youth.

Central's Sept. 25 service was counted among the more than 350 DREAM Sabbath observances that took place in 45 U.S. states Sept. 16 through Oct. 9, World Communion Sunday.

The DREAM Act would allow some undocumented immigrant students the opportunity to earn legal status if they came to the United States as children, are long-term U.S. residents, have good moral character and complete two years of college or military service.

In Spring Hill UMC in Lillington, the Rev. Terry Williams said denominational leaders encouraged churches

to combine World Communion Sunday with a Dream Sabbath. "We were to consider inviting students and legislative experts to come and educate our communities about the DREAM Act," Williams said.

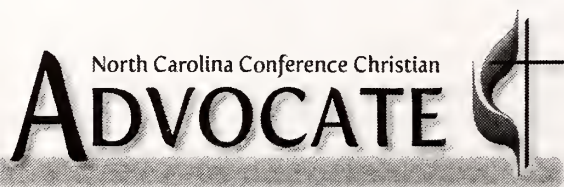
"It's a controversial subject, and it's passage undetermined. This bill, regardless of how we feel individually, is worthy, at a minimum, of our consideration," he said to his congregation.

Speaking at Spring Hill was former US Representative Bob Etheridge. He offered remarks on the importance of adoption of the act, calling it a "non-partisan education bill, not a bill regarding immigration."

After the service, a member of Spring Hill told Williams that "I was glad to learn more about The DREAM Act bill. It was not at all what I'd been led to believe."

As Finegan shook hands with congregants after service, she said she was pleased to receive affirmations of support from people who previously had opposed the DREAM Act. "Thanks for explaining the difference

See "DREAM Sabbath," pg 5



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. Email submissions in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published. Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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CONTACT: bnorton@nccumc.org or (919) 779-6115 with any questions.

UMW hold Annual Meeting, pledge \$450,000 to mission

By Ann Davis *

The North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women met at Fayetteville University on Oct. 8 for their Annual Meeting. Conference President Ann Davis convened the 39th gathering with a special welcome to the approximately 400 registered attendees.

The Greenville District served as host for the meeting. The 2009-2012 Quadrennial theme is "In God's mission, we are sent out to connect."

The business session opened with the awarding of the 2010 Book of Reports to Madoline Murphy. Murphy is a lifelong member of United Methodist Women from Greenville. During the award presentation, Murphy was cited as "showing her commitment, enthusiasm and passion in all her mission projects."

Sonja Tilley, Conference Education & Interpretation coordinator, led the Candle Burning ceremony along with the 12 District Education and Interpretation coordinators. The cost for one minute is \$36. Each district lit a candle that represented the amount of dollars collected and the number of hours that each candle burned in honor or in memory of a special loved one. The total amount collected was \$41,398.30 representing 19 hours, 9 minutes and 57 seconds.

Juanita Staples, chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, reported that seven women were awarded scholarships. Four women will attend Methodist University and three will attend Duke Divinity School.

Two of the scholarship recipients, Heather Shackelford and Lynn Batts Benson attended the meeting and thanked the UMW Conference for their scholarships. The total amount awarded was \$10,000.

Mission accomplishments were celebrated: The Reading Banner was presented to the Raleigh District. There was an increased number of children in the Reading Program.

The Elizabeth City District was the recipient of the Study Jewel. One local UMW unit was reorganized.

The Rockingham District and the Raleigh District gained new members. In recognition of the Mission Today program 14 local units received Gold Certificates for their completion of 20 items required to achieve the gold status.

The 2012 budget was presented by Sonja Tilley, Conference Education and Financial Interpretation coordinator, and approved by the voting body. The Pledge to Mission for 2012 is \$450,000. These funds are generated from approximately 18,917 faithful local unit members.

Brenda Brown, former Conference

UMW Vice President and Women's Division director installed the 2012 slate of Conference officers as follows: President – LaNella Smith; Vice President – Theresa Hodges; Secretary – Marjorie Brown; Treasurer – Joyce Herring; Social Action Coordinator – JoAnn Stanford; Education and Interpretation – Sonja Tilley; Membership, Nurture and Outreach – Melba McCallum; Spiritual Growth – JoAnn Pemberton; Chairperson of Nominations – Susan Eudy; Communications Coordinator – Ceil Matthews; Secretary of Program Resources – Ann Krieger; Committee on Nominations – Susan Rayle, Daisy Dye, Louise Mitchell, Ginny Crocker, Stephanie Houze and Lisa Bachman.

JoAnn Stanford, Spiritual Growth coordinator led the Remembrance Service. Districts recognized UMW members who died after the adjournment of the 2010 Annual Meeting.

The program concluded with worship. The Rev. Beth Hood, Greenville District superintendent, preached the sermon entitled "Sent Out to Connect." Bishop Al Gwinn led the Communion Service.

Ann Davis closed the meeting reminding everyone to be God's good and faithful servants by connecting with each other through our faith, hope and love in action.

The congregation sang the chorus of "Let's Go Fly a Kite," a song related to the conference theme and sung at the end of many conferences.

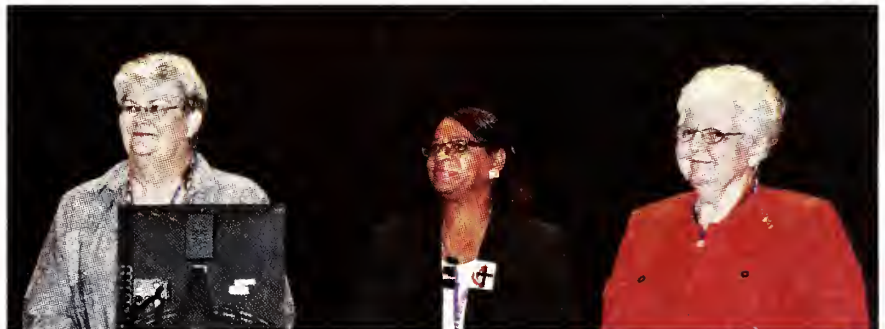
* Ann Davis is president of NC Conference United Methodist Women.



Around 400 attended the 39th annual meeting of the United Methodist Women.



Lib Creech (GO District) places a sign with the amount of the Goldsboro District pledge for mission support during the Annual Meeting. Madoline Murphy, sitting on the stage, plays the part of a beggar pleading for the support to mission.



Retiring officers during the UMW conference were (l-r) JoAnn Barbour, social action; Melba McCallum, membership nurture and outreach coordinator; and Ann Davis, president. (Photos by Bill Norton)



New leaders, taking office Jan. 1, 2012, are (L-R) LaNella Smith, president; Marjorie Brown, secretary; Ann Krieger, secretary of program resources; JoAnn Stanford, mission coordinator for social action; Patricia Pemberton, mission coordinator for spiritual growth; Susan Eudy, chairperson of committee on nominations; Stephanie House, committee on nominations; Lisa Bachman, committee on nominations.

DREAM Sabbath presented *continued from page 4*

between the DREAM Act and amnesty," one told her.

Another told her: "Well, if the DREAM Act is really the way you presented it, with all these facts, I am for it! Who wouldn't want children who grew up with our children to have the same rights that citizenship can afford?"

During his sermon at Spring Hill, Williams pointed out that World Communion Sunday was a time

to "celebrate our unity around the Lord's table."

"Let us use this as an opportunity to examine some of the causes of division among us and then accept the challenge, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to seek ways of overcoming those divisions so that one day, even a casually observing world will see that Jesus' challenge has been achieved, that by God's grace, Jesus' followers really are one," he said.

(Portions of the above are from an article by Kathy L. Gilbert, a multimedia reporter for the young adult content team at United Methodist Communications, Nashville, Tenn.)

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2011 clergy age trends report shows more older and younger clergy, large drop in clergy ages 35-54



The United Methodist Church has more older and younger clergy, and the percentage of middle age clergy of the past decade has drastically declined, the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary has reported.

The report also indicates that clergy between the ages of 55 and 72 are the largest group in the history of the church, and the median age of elders remains at a historic high of 55.

The figures were cited in the center's annual "Clergy Age Trends in The United Methodist Church."

This year's report was prepared with assistance from the General Board of Pension and Health

percent of active elders as recently as 2000. Previously their percentage of the total was even lower.

The median age of elders remains at 55 in 2011, the highest in history, reached first in 2010. The median age was 50 in 2000 and 45 in 1973.

The median age in the North Carolina, Western North Carolina, and Virginia Conferences is 52. In South Carolina it is 53.

The percentage of middle age elders continues to shrink

The percentage of elders aged 35 to 54 continues to shrink, from 65 percent of all active elders in 2000 to 43 percent in 2011.

The number of young clergy continues to grow slowly but steadily

There are more young elders, deacons, and local pastors than there were 10 years ago.

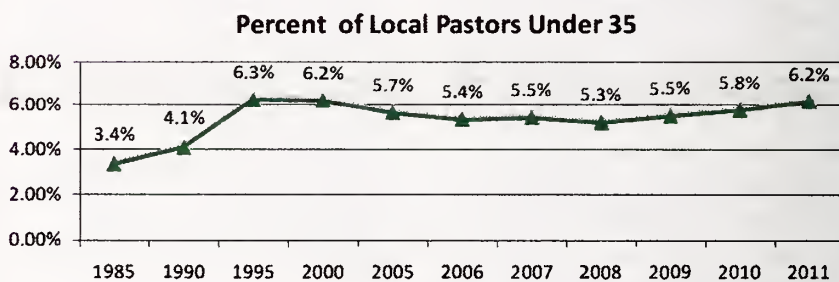
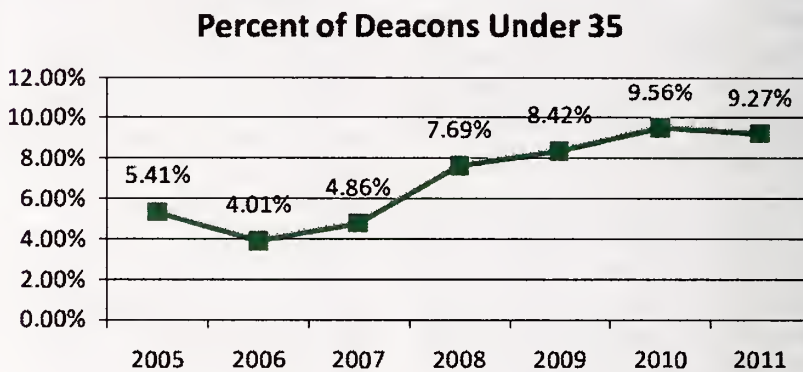
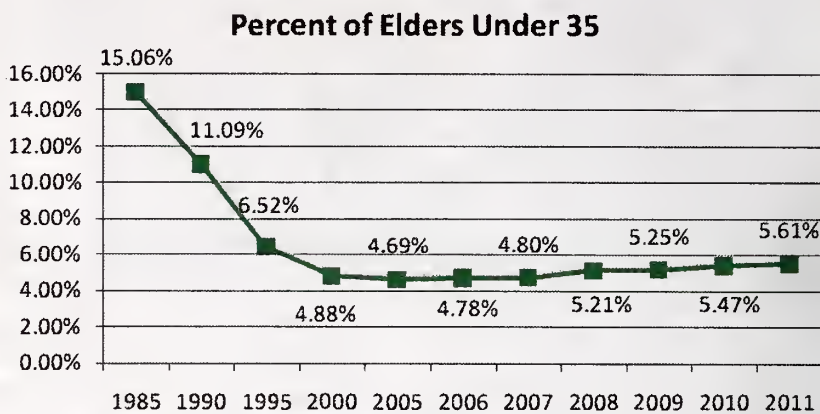
The numbers and percentages of young elders and local pastors grew slightly in 2011.

Young deacons declined very slightly after growing much faster than elders and local pastors for several years.

There are more young local pastors in 2011 (455) than at any time in recent history.

Their percentage of all local pastors (6.2 percent) has remained relatively stable since 1995, before which it had been much lower.

More information is available in the complete Clergy Age Trends report, which is available for download at <http://www.churchleadership.com/>



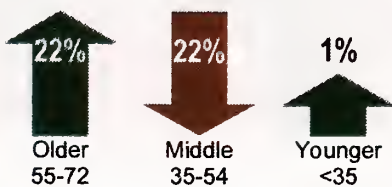
Notes on the chart data:

ELDERS: To have comparable figures across the years for elders, the figures include not only those ordained elder but also those commissioned on the elder track but not yet ordained. Since the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits does not keep records of clergy by race, we were not able to make comparisons by racial groups. Elders are counted by where they hold conference membership even if they are serving in another conference.

DEACONS: Ordained deacons as we have now in the United Methodist Church are relatively new, making trend comparisons over many years difficult; however, we do report current age data. We include not only those who have been ordained deacon but also those who have been commissioned on the deacon track but not yet ordained. Readers should keep in mind that the number of total deacons is significantly lower in this report than their presence in the denomination because more deacons than other clergy work in employment settings with pension plans other than through the General Board.

LOCAL PASTORS: For local pastors, full-time, part-time, and student local pastors are included.

Change in Elder Age Groups 2000-2011



Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

Benefits.

Highlights of the 2011 report:

Older clergy constitute largest share of clergy

Elders between ages 55 and 72 comprise 52 percent of all active elders, the highest percentage in history.

One year ago this group reached 50 percent for the first time ever. This age cohort represented only 30

Conference	Elders				Deacons				Local Pastors			
	Under 35	35-54	55-72	Total	Under 35	35-54	55-72	Total	Under 35	35-54	55-72	Total
North Carolina	33	201	200	434	0	9	15	24	13	87	110	210
Virginia	57	280	333	670	4	13	13	30	16	110	153	279
Western North Carolina	52	369	341	762	8	27	13	48	14	122	135	271
South Carolina	31	165	246	442	2	11	13	26	14	62	137	213
U.S. TOTALS	951	7,213	8,790	16,954	88	398	463	949	455	2,790	4,108	7,353

ABA approves legal studies program at MU

The Legal Studies Program at Methodist University in Fayetteville has received approval by American Bar Association (ABA).

The process to receive ABA approval took about three years to complete. A self-study had to be submitted. It was returned several months later with corrections and updates.

In January, a site team was sent from the ABA to ensure that the Legal Studies Program meet the requirements for approval. The team spent three days on campus meeting with the dean of Academic Affairs, dean of School of Public Affairs, Career Services, director of Library Services, and alumni of the program and current students.

At the annual conference for the ABA in August, the House of Delegates approved the Legal Studies program for American Bar Association Approval.



Wendy Vonnegut (left), director of Legal Studies at MU, led the effort to gain ABA approval. She and Dr. Delmas Crisp, associate vice president of academics, are shown holding the document announcing approval of the Legal Studies Program.

North Carolina Conference Christian
ADVOCATE

**Submitting Around the
Conference Information**

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org.

The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication.

All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats. Items must be sent in separate files; photos cannot be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.

See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.



A rubbing is taken from the commemorative plaque which accompanies the Louisburg College labyrinth.

Louisburg College labyrinth – meditation for all souls

By Samantha Pendergraft *

Over the summer of 2011, Will Hinton, long-time professor of visual arts at Louisburg College, built a labyrinth in front of the Robbins Library on the campus of the small, private liberal arts college, which is rooted in The United Methodist Church.

Hinton describes the labyrinth as "a tool that increases what we can accomplish." It is also a tool, he says, "of transformation and a crucible for change in our lives — where a person's psyche meets their soul."

According to Hinton, any person of any religion can meditate while following the path on the labyrinth.

"Your path winds throughout the pattern and becomes a mirror of the way in which we live our lives," says Hinton.

"In the Old Testament, it speaks about God's people going on a journey. The New Testament describes Jesus Christ modeling a path of unconditional love and forgiveness.

Now, and even then, a labyrinth represents our life's journey."

Hinton recently came across a Jewish term, "Gilgul," which implies a reincarnation or a reclarification of souls. He finds this term very interesting, as it hits close to home for him having grown up in the small town of Gatesville (population 250) where the church and the community were highly valued.

"When I see the labor and thought which shaped the labyrinth, it feels to me that it is not me doing the work, but something much bigger, much older, much truer working through me," he says, adding that he thinks his parents would be very proud.

Hinton feels that the labyrinth will serve as a core component of the liberal arts experience of Louisburg College.

"The three parts of spending time in the labyrinth consist of Purgation, Illumination, and Union," Hinton explains. "They are also known as



The new labyrinth is located in front of Robbins Library at Louisburg College.

Release, Receive, and Return."

"This tool for walking meditation is open to Louisburg College students, staff, and faculty, community members, and all folks on their journey — 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year," explains Hinton.

People of all ages are welcome to visit the labyrinth, including children.

After walking the labyrinth, they can create an image of it to take with them by using paper and crayon to create a rubbing of the bronze plaque at the entrance.

"They [the children] seem excited and think it is cool to take a piece of the labyrinth experience home with them," said Hinton.

His dream of building the labyrinth came true due to the vision and initial support from Louisburg College's Golden Anniversary Club.

To view a short, two-part documentary about the Louisburg College Labyrinth, search the term "Building the Louisburg College Labyrinth" on www.youtube.com.

To read more about the process of building the labyrinth, please visit lclabyrinth.blogspot.com.

* Samantha Pendergraft graduated from Louisburg College in '09 with an A.A. degree. She is currently pursuing a B.A. in communications from William Peace University. She served as an intern in the Office of Marketing and Communications at Louisburg College during the summer of 2011.

See "UMC mobile app," pg 15

UM Communications launches new mobile phone app

Mobile device users can easily access information about The United Methodist Church on the go with a new free United Methodist application. Developed by United Methodist Communications and Music City Networks, the app is available for free download for iPad and iPhone and for Android smartphone users.

The application enables mobile access to daily devotions, news, videos, photos, social media sites and a searchable index of United Methodist churches by geographic area. The "Ask InfoServ" feature connects users who have questions about the church or requests for resources with church staff who can help.

"We created the app so that we could deliver information about the denomination to people in a way that's fast, simple and easy to use," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United

At Bishop's Day Apart, participants explore the relationship between the church and the world

By Para Drake *

Welcomed by smiling parking helpers, morning coffee and a homemade continental breakfast, the Order of Elders was convened on Tuesday, Sept. 20 at Nashville UMC by Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr.

The first challenge was: "Imagine your community without your congregation's church — Would anyone notice the church was closed, shut down and sold to an art gallery or a coffee shop? Would a trendy restaurant attract more people to the cozy atmosphere of the sanctuary? Has some local businessman or entrepreneur got her or his eye on your prime church property for "re-purposing?"

Parallel streams

In his day-long seminar, hosted by the Academy for Leadership Excellence, Rick Rusaw, author of several books on the "externally focused church," described the relationship between the church and the "world" as two parallel streams of water.

The parallel streams, The Sacred — with God, flows behind the church, while out front, The Secular — without God, flows by the doors of the sanctuary. He observed that the Church, withdrawing itself, created her own stream of life: Christian schools, businesses, day care, and other services.

The result, Rusaw notes, takes Christians are out of the mainstream, thereby encouraging the "secular" to go its own way without the engagement by Christians. "Drill

down," Rusaw asked of himself, "If our church closed would anyone miss it?"

"Let's be with them"

Rusaw was clear about the history of the "externally focused church" he pastors in Colorado; Lifebridge Christian Church did not grow because of a church growth strategy.

It stopped resourcing to attract people and, in a subtle shift without fanfare, began to interact with the community through Lifebridge folks who became involved in the community.

"Let's be with them" became the theme that encourages folks to find a place to serve. Service within the ministry of the congregation found a partner and a twin in the encouragement of service in the community as individuals began to seek the lost and the least within and beyond the church walls. He offered the contrast of "being church" to "going to church" to consider.

It really is about the relationship, Rusaw explained. The church's withdrawal from secular community involvement as it developed its "own" parallel stream has created a difficult chasm to breach for folks who are not "in the know."

His vision for the "externally focused" church is founded on the principle that what matters is the service in the community comes out of the relationship between Christians who care about the same things that the community cares about.

And in that mutual caring, the



Guest speaker, Rick Rusaw, lead pastor of Lifebridge Christian Church in Colorado, spoke at the convening of the Order of Elders in September. During his presentation, Rusaw raised the challenge, "Imagine your community without your congregation's church — Would anyone notice the church was closed?" The day-long seminar was hosted by the Academy for Leadership Excellence and held at Nashville UMC.

relationships and trust build so that, if the ecclesial agenda is not pushed, Christians can be given the opportunity to "speak into the lives of those they serve.

That right to speak takes a long time to develop." And that "right to speak" finds life in the attitude and service of those Christians who go out beyond their church walls.

"You have to rake a lot of leaves before people call you," Rusaw reminded the crowd.

Belief, attitude, clear action

The five characteristics of an externally focused church are based on belief, attitude, and clear action:

1. Believe the community cannot be healthy without the church
2. Believe that Christians don't grow until they begin to serve
3. Understand the power of service—and God gets the credit
4. Are evangelistically effective
5. Partner with others on common concerns, not common beliefs.

Rusaw sprinkled the presentation with caveats that push against common mistakes that break relationship rather than foster the relationship needed to build trust.

These include recognizing the community's need of the church by serving within the mainstream, giving up speaking church-talk; happily following the host agency's rules; ditching team logo tee-shirts as not necessary; serving without concern of who gets the credit — glorifying God's work in the community is understood — other agencies, businesses may get the "thank you note."

Marketing and service do not belong together noted Rusaw. A mission trip marketing the church with logos, etc., can be offensive to others. (Reminder — Jesus said don't let your one hand know what your other hand is giving.)

Partner by building wells, not walls with others; engage, not compete; create new ministry only when there

See "Between the church...", page 9

Contrasting paradigms

Church

Local
Internal focus
Propositional truth
Exclusive
Evangelism is the goal
Stair-step growth
Proclamation
Sunday
Sacred versus secular
You go to church

Kingdom

Global
External focus
God's narrative story
Inclusive
Evangelism is starting point
Journey
Proclamation / demonstration
Every day
Integrating sacred & secular
You are the church

Good deeds create good will

... and good will opens the door to good conversations about the Good News. People always ask:

"Who are you?"

"Why are you doing this?"

Externally focused living defines who you are as a church

You must create systems that operationalize your values or they are not your values—merely your sentiments. How?

1. Preach and teach about it—Help people tell their story
2. Make it part of your plans
3. Engage in annual / church-wide days of service
4. Infuse service into small groups

Between the church and the world continued from page 8

is no ministry to serve a community need. Ultimately, when considering partnership relationships, Rusaw's "centered set" question is, "Do you care about what I care about?"

Then, he believes the church can become actively engaged as "people of good faith working together with people of good will."

People of good will are those who are spiritually neutral and morally positive, says Rusaw.

In the community or for the community?

Ultimately, the church must not ask, "How can we become the best church in the community?"

The church's question is, "How can we become the best church for the community?"

Among the nine paradigm shifts he lists are: a change in focus from taking care of what's internal to what's external; from church growth by the numbers to transformation of lives; from belief alone to belief that Christians don't grow until they begin to serve others. (Ephesians 2:8-10); and that the value of service on the outside of the church is as valuable on the inside of the church.

Rusaw also described the shift from "taking Jesus with us" to "going with Jesus."

What if Christians asked what kind of mayor Jesus would be — what would he do about the homeless, the hungry, beauty and goodness, kids, elderly, education and families in crisis? What kind of service would Mayor Jesus provide?

Imagine that today, churches are surrounded by two streams of water, and the people are sure that only one is sacred, with God and the other is secular, without God.

God lets the people think what they will, but God sees and chooses one stream.

Rusaw said that the people would find Mayor Jesus standing in that cultural stream calling Christians

to get out of their own conceived "sacred" stream and join him in the cultural stream where the needs of the world meet the holiness of God.

He emphasized, "The story is a kingdom story, about the transformation of lives and being the church." The story is not a church story about conversion and coming to church, along with the counts. It is about having the confidence that "Just because you can't do everything, doesn't mean you do nothing."

An externally focused church is about "show and tell: God loves us and we believe that's got to show up somewhere."

Rusaw's books include, *The Externally Focused Church*, *The Externally Focused Life*, and *The Externally Focused Quest*.

Learn more online at externallyfocusednetwork.com.

* The Rev. Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and an assignment writer for the NCC Christian Advocate.

Belief, attitude, and clear *action*

Finances

Internal Focus

How much we keep
Church is a holding tank
Scarcity mentality
Church savings
Giving
Pledge drives
Paying for things
Giving to the church

External Focus

How much we give away
Church is a pipeline
Abundance mentality
Microloans
Empowering
Jesus-like generosity
Providing seed money
Giving to the church and other organizations

In the Community or For the Community?

Facilities

Internal Focus

Facilities are for the church
Counting church people here on Sunday
We need to protect our facilities
Facilities are designed for the congregation
This is "our house"
Keep the facilities for ourselves

External Focus

Facilities are for church and community
Counting people who use the facility during the week
We need to open up our facilities
Facilities are designed for the community
This is your house
Market the facilities to the community

"Let's be *with* them"

People—Leaders & Others

Internal Focus

Church people
Clergy and laity have a ministry
Number of people who attend
"What do we need?"
Small groups and Sunday school "for us"
People consuming religious goods and services
Trying to bring in more people "like us"
Loving what we do
Growing people through church
People in the pews
People in programs
"How's our church doing?"

External Focus

Kingdom people
Everyone is on mission
Number of people who are released
"What does the community need?"
Mentoring and tutoring "for them"
People equipped to serve others
Trying to serve others unlike us
Loving people and what they do
Growing people through service programs
People in the streets
People development
"How's our city doing?"

Make Disciples of Jesus Christ to Transform the World

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GENERAL CONFERENCE 2012 • TAMPA, FL



Several major reforms are being proposed at the 2012 General Conference.

On pages 10-13 are stories about some of the issues delegates will consider at the denomination's quadrennial meeting in Florida.

Five proposals would change UMC structure

By Heather Hahn*

Over the summer, members of the Connectional Table endorsed five proposals that would change The United Methodist Church's structure and potentially its funding.

East Ohio Area Bishop John L. Hopkins, the Connectional Table's chairperson, called the proposals "far-reaching."

"What we're trying to do is simplify the church and integrate it more," he said. He added that the changes are intended to help the general church's programs and resources better serve the needs of annual (regional) conferences and local churches.

The proposals are the result of the church's Call to Action process, adopted by the denomination's Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table in their fall 2010 meetings.

The 60-member Connectional Table coordinates the denomination's mission, ministries and resources, and it is responsible for recommending changes in agency structures.

The body voted to recommend:

- ♦ Making "necessary changes" to allow for "a just, reasonable and compassionate process" for low-performing clergy to leave the itinerancy.
- ♦ Consolidating 10 of the denomination's 13 general agencies into five offices that will be part of a new United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry. The center will have a 15-member board of directors, which will be accountable to a 45-member advisory board that will "represent the diversity and inclusiveness of our Church."

Under the recommendation, the consolidation will take place in two phases and be completed by 2014.

- ♦ Forming a special study task force to determine the optimal organizational structure and business model of the United Methodist Publishing House and the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits, both "fee-for-service" organizations. The task force is to make its recommendations by the end of 2013.
- ♦ Having the General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking assembly, authorize the board of the new United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry to study the most effective ways to fulfill the mission of the church. Under this proposal, the board would evaluate programs and spending at all levels of the church and ultimately could direct the reallocation of up to \$60 million during the 2013-2016 quadrennium.
- ♦ Forming a task force that would conduct a denomination-wide financial analysis and initiate proposals for a more equitable and effective apportionment system across all annual conferences. Apportionments support ministries at the annual conference and General Conference levels.

The role of General Conference in guiding the work of the church remains paramount in the new model. "We really feel that General Conference sets the values of our church, not a board of directors," Hopkins noted.

The Connectional Table took up and refined the recommendations as part of the multiyear Call to Action process, which has found that the status quo of a shrinking and aging U.S. church is "toxic" and unsustainable.

The suggested changes originated with the Interim Operations Team, a group of laity and clergy working with denominational leadership to implement the Call to Action recommendations.

The recommendations will be drafted into legislation for the 2012 General Conference, which has final say on whether these structural changes come to pass.

Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, the convener of the Interim Operations Team, expressed confidence that the changes will help the church promote vital congregations and address the decades of membership decline in the United States.

"I think some bold directions have been embraced," Palmer said. "We're looking at a much more nimble structure that creates some new possibilities of coherence and flexibility."

Changes to clergy job guarantees

Just about every category of church leadership will be affected by the proposals.

The first recommendations dealing with clergy follow on the heels of a number of church studies questioning the sustainability and effectiveness of job guarantees for ordained elders.

The denomination's current process to dismiss incompetent clergy is unwieldy, said Washington Area Bishop John Schol, a Connectional

Table member.

"When we talk about this as bishops, we all recognize that there needs to be a process," Schol told those gathered. "This isn't just a decision that's made by a bishop or district superintendent that we don't think a person is appointable, so now they are no longer appointable....The problem now is the process is so cumbersome and takes so much effort and eventually must be approved by all the clergy that this person might be friends with. It's a process that just doesn't work."

The Connectional Table's recommendation is conditioned on no other body in the church proposing legislation to General Conference to alter the process for dismissing ineffective pastors. If no other legislation is submitted, the Connectional Table asks that General Conference appoint a team to study and report to the 2016 General Conference a process for transitioning clergy in a way that best serves congregations, clergy and the denomination.

Changes to general agencies

The proposed structural changes have implications for the nearly 1,400 people who work for the denomination's 13 general agencies. The number of staff positions in the general agencies has decreased steadily, from 3,139 in 1971 to 1,384 as of 2010.

The Connectional Table's recommendation endorses the move by the denomination's ecumenical agency, the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, to become part of the

See "Five proposals" page 12

Bishops endorse church restructure proposals

By Heather Hahn*

United Methodist bishops voted overwhelmingly Nov. 1 in favor of proposals to restructure the denomination and redistribute up to \$60 million in church funds.

The vote specifically endorsed a letter, titled "For the Sake of a New World, We See a New Church: A Call to Action," detailing changes — some requiring action by General Conference, some not.

"We see a new church," the bishops' letter says. "It is a church that is clear about its mission and confident about its future, a church that is always reaching out, inviting, alive, agile and resilient."

It asks all United Methodists to "work to do the 'new thing' God intends for our church and discover the path God is making for our future."

The Council of Bishops' vote came as part of the multiyear Call to Action process, which aims to reverse decades of declining membership and financial giving in the United States and to increase congregational vitality.

With their vote, the bishops endorsed the proposed consolidation of nine of the denomination's 13 general agencies into a new United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry.

Legislation submitted to General Conference by the Connectional Table calls for the center to have a 15-member board of directors accountable to a 45-member advisory board called the General Council for Strategy and Oversight.

The council would replace the Connectional Table, which coordinates the denomination's mission, ministries and resources.

Church needs a GPS

The vote came after two days of discussions among the bishops in private conversations, small groups and plenary sessions.

Even as many bishops stood up to commend the letter, they also said there were parts they would tweak if they could. "I don't agree with everything" was a frequent refrain.

However, many bishops insisted The United Methodist Church needs some kind of reform.

Iowa Area Bishop Julius C. Trimble likened the letter to a GPS that can guide drivers toward their destination even if it doesn't always get them to the exact address.

"We cannot get where we want to go without some form of a GPS, and we certainly aren't going to get close without leaving the house," Trimble



Bishop Mike Lowry reads questions about Interim Operations Team proposals at the Council of Bishops meeting at Lake Junaluska. (Photo by Ronny Perry/UMNS)

told his colleagues to murmurs of agreement.

Bishops also acknowledged that General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body, likely would alter the legislation. General Conference will next convene April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

What the bishops endorsed

The Council of Bishops and Connectional Table initiated the Call to Action process "to reorder the life of the church" two years ago in the wake of the 2008 global economic crisis.

At its November 2010 meeting, the council endorsed the Call to Action recommendations and the "adaptive challenge" to redirect resources toward fostering vital congregations.

The suggested structural changes the bishops took up this year originated with the Interim Operations Team, a group of eight laity and clergy working with denominational leadership to implement the Call to Action recommendations.

Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, the Interim Operations Team convener, asked the bishops to "embrace and affirm" the team's work.

In showing their approval, he said the bishops would be showing "our commitment to lead the church" and use the changes as "instruments in service to vision and mission."

Palmer also stressed that more than 50 percent of the work the bishops need to do to foster vital congregations does not require General Conference legislation.

Bishops do not vote at General Conference, nor do they address the assembly on legislative matters without special permission.

However, there are no limits on conversations with delegates and other church members outside the sessions.

In addition to endorsing

restructuring and allowing the redistribution of up to \$60 million in general church funds, the bishops, in the letter, urge General Conference to give annual conferences more freedom in how they organize, allow the election of a non-residential bishop to serve as president of the Council of Bishops and provide support for collecting consistent information from all annual conferences about their financial practices.

The council said it favors adopting stronger and more transparent measures and procedures for the

accountability of bishops. The bishops also said they would work with appropriate general church offices, seminary leadership and annual conference boards of ordained ministry to strengthen support for United Methodist seminaries, address curriculum requirements and clarify expectations.

The bishops said their annual conferences will strive to improve "recruitment and support of the most fruitful and effective young clergy" and strengthen clergy recruitment, formation and the appointment process to improve vitality.

Bishops voice concerns

The bishops' vote, by a show of hands, included a handful of "no" votes. The dissenting voices included Denver Area Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky.

After the vote, she said she would have preferred that the bishops could have registered their support for each legislative proposal individually. Her motion during the meeting to allow that failed.

She also would have preferred more conversation about the proposed

See "Bishops endorse" page 12

In their letter, the bishops urge General Conference to:

- Give annual conferences freedom to organize their structures for greater fruitfulness.
- Permit the mid-quadrennium reallocation of up to \$60 million from general church funds for creating and increasing vital congregations.
- Provide for the Council of Bishops to elect a non-residential bishop as council president to help reform the council and focus its energies on core challenges.
- Create a United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry under one board of directors to combine the functions of the Connectional Table and nine general agencies: the Board of Church and Society, Board of Global Ministries, Board of Discipleship, Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Commission on Archives and History, Council on Finance and Administration, Commission on Religion and Race, Commission on the Status and Role of Women and United Methodist Communications (which operates United Methodist News Service). The work would be organized into offices of shared services, congregational vitality, leadership excellence, missional engagement, and justice and reconciliation.
- Move the functions of the church's ecumenical agency, the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, to an office of the Council of Bishops.
- Set aside United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men as self-funded, official membership-based organizations.
- Provide a support system for collecting consistent information for all annual conferences about financial practices and recommend to bishops and others strategies for reducing costs and increasing effectiveness.



Bishop Eben K. Nihwatiwa pins a question on Interim Operations Team chart at Council of Bishops meeting. (Photo by Ronny Perry/UMNS)

Five proposals continued from page 10

Council of Bishops.

In the Connectional Table's proposal, many of the ministries of the current agencies would be subsumed under the newly created Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry.

The new center would have five offices.

The first would be an office of shared services that would include the "essential functions" of the General Council of Finance and Administration, UM Communications and other agencies' communications staff members, the UM Commission on Archives and History, and the denomination's information and technology support.

The other proposed offices are designed with the denomination's Four Areas of Focus in mind, according to Mary Brooke Casad, executive secretary of the Connectional Table. "An intentional effort was made to pull the functions that our agencies are currently charged with into offices that reflect the work of the Four Areas of Focus."

The offices would comprise:

- ♦ An Office of Congregational Vitality, encompassing "the essential functions" of the UM Board of Discipleship and multicultural ministries. (New Places and People)
- ♦ An Office of Leadership Excellence, encompassing much of the work currently done by the Board of Higher Education and Ministry. (Developing Leaders)
- ♦ An Office of Missional Engagement, responsible for much of the work of the UM of Global Ministries, including global health, missionaries, Volunteers in Mission and the UM Committee on Relief. (Global Health)
- ♦ An Office of Justice and Reconciliation, encompassing

the essential functions of the UM Board of Church and Society, the Commission on Religion and Race and the Commission on the Status and Role of Women. (Ministry with the Poor)

How the work of United Methodist Men and the Women's Division fits into this model is being worked out.

If this recommendation gains General Conference approval in 2012, the plan calls for the transition to be conducted in two phases, with all agencies operating in their current structures initially and then moving to the new organizational chart over a period of about two years.

Too early to tell implications

"I think looking at how the general church can operate more efficiently and effectively is a good thing," Erin Hawkins, the top executive of the Commission on Religion and Race, told UMNS. "I'm encouraged that we are in the conversation of how we make what we do better and more effective. I think it's too early to tell what the implications will be."

In the new model, staff with similar responsibilities across agencies would work together more effectively.

The attempt "is not to squeeze (functions) into one box but to have it so the left hand and right hand are talking as one staff," said Bishop Hopkins. "You have a closer relationship with staff that are doing the same thing."

The Call to Action research found that there is a great sense of distance between leaders at all levels of the church and the people in the pews. Hopkins and others expressed hope that the changes would close some of that gap.

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.

Bishops endorse proposals

continued from page 11

Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry. "I think a certain amount of humility and doubt about what we do is appropriate," she said.

Still, Stanovsky said she would support the action of the Council of Bishops and thinks the Interim Operations Team is trying to lead the denomination in the right direction.

Other bishops voiced concerns, while some doubted how much effect the changes, if adopted, would have.

Pittsburgh Area Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton asked what essential functions would be lost if \$60 million that would ordinarily go to general agencies over the next four years would be redistributed.

The proposed legislation would authorize the board of the newly created center to allocate \$5 million to theological education in central conferences outside the United States.

In addition, \$5 million would be allocated for young people's lay leadership development and \$50 million for recruiting and training United Methodist ministerial students under the age of 35 and increasing vital congregations.

The Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, the Board of Discipleship's top executive, told the council it is not yet clear exactly what the impact would be on ministries of the general agencies.

The impact could be severe. Agencies already face a more than 6 percent cut in their funding under the 2013-16 budget of \$603 million, which the General Council on Finance and Administration has submitted to General Conference.

Potentially, the redistribution could mean an additional loss in

funding of almost 10 percent.

"The list (of possible cuts in programming) is long and extensive, and, depending on priorities and decisions made by folks after General Conference, we would have to make those very critical decisions," Greenwaldt said, referring to her own agency's work.

East Angola Area Bishop Jose Quipungo does not expect the proposed restructuring to have much effect on the central conferences – church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. However, he said, "It is good for us to recognize we are not perfect, but the people called Methodist are working toward perfection."

A number of bishops said they felt they could put the funds to better use at the annual conference and local church level.

After the vote, Washington Area Bishop John R. Schol – who leads the bishops' Vital Congregations Initiative – said he thinks overall the changes will better align the denomination to support vital congregations.

"Those are the congregations that are growing over time, reaching out to their communities, and they are engaging more of their laity in ministry," he said.

"Some of the changes we talked about today are legislative, but there's far more change that's really about leadership at all levels of the church – bishops, general agency staff, local congregations – all beginning to say we're going to do something different," he said.

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.



Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky raises a question during discussion of the Interim Operations Team proposal. (Photo by Ronny Perry/UMNS)

International panel urges denomination to be more global in nature, less U.S.-centric

By Heather Hahn *

The time has come for The United Methodist Church to get serious about its global nature and be less U.S.-centric, says an international panel of United Methodist leaders.

"We are really hoping to shape the hearts and minds of the church," said Bishop Scott J. Jones, chair of the Committee to Study the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church.

"We want the leaders to understand our world-wide nature and the diversity that we think is a real blessing in the life of the church," Jones added.

Final report

To that end, the 20-member committee has issued a report and proposed legislation to General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body.

Text of the Final Worldwide Report to 2012 General Conference is available online at <http://worldwideumc.org>. From the Library menu, select Studies and Reports.

The legislation would:

- ♦ Incorporate a new worldwide United Methodist Church covenant into the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's law book. The covenant will be accompanied by a "Litany for the Covenant of The Worldwide United Methodist Church."
- ♦ Make clear in a new global *Book of Discipline* what decisions the General Conference makes and which areas of ministry and organization are adaptable by central conferences outside the U.S.
- ♦ Clarify how general agencies function in a worldwide rather than U.S.-centric church.
- ♦ Set in motion a process for annual (regional) conferences to study a proposed new model for a worldwide church. This study process may result in petitions for greater structural change at the 2016 General Conference.

Passing this legislation requires a majority vote of General Conference delegates. The next General Conference meets April 24-May 4, 2012, in Tampa, Fla.

Vision:

We see a worldwide United Methodist Church driven to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To live more fully into this vision, we are working toward deeper connections throughout the church, greater local authority, and more equitable sharing of power and representation around the world. — Committee to Study the World-wide Nature of The United Methodist Church

Studying and listening

The United Methodist Church has nearly 40,000 congregations in the United States, Africa, Europe and the Philippines. As of 2010, the denomination's membership topped 12 million members worldwide.

However, the denomination's U.S. membership has been declining for more than 40 years, even as the church in Africa and the Philippines has been growing. Today, about 7.8 million United Methodists live in the United States. The 2008 General Conference authorized the formation of a worldwide nature study committee tasked with examining the denomination's changing demographics and take recommendations to General Conference.

The group met six times between August 2009 and July 2011.

In addition, members traveled around the globe for listening sessions with United Methodists in the Philippines, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Europe as well as the United States.

In its report to General Conference, the panel listed some of what members heard in their travels to central conferences, including desires for more ministerial education, greater communication with general agencies and the ability to adapt the *Book of Discipline*.

Overwhelmingly, Jones said, he heard "a strong desire for the world-wide unity of the church at the same time as a desire for greater mutual understanding and respect."

"The dynamic with which we were

working was the desire to clarify what holds us together while allowing for greater freedom in other matters," he added.

Proposed covenant and legislation

The committee is particularly eager to get United Methodists on board with adding the new covenant to the *Book of Discipline*, said Jones, who also oversees the Kansas Area. The covenant puts into words values most church members already embrace but may not be fully aware of, he said.

"United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission," the covenant says in part.

"Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining 'a vital web of interactive relationships.'"

The proposed legislation to clarify the *Book of Discipline* specifies that matters such as the denomination's doctrine, Constitution, Social Principles and structure would not be subject to adaptation.

However, the legislation, if passed, would empower annual conferences outside the United States to set some different educational standards for ordination as elders and deacons.

At General Conference, the committee also wants to set in motion consideration of a new worldwide model that would have The United

Methodist Church organized in the same central conferences structure, with the five U.S. jurisdictions constituting a new central conference.

Under the model, jurisdictions would still elect bishops in the United States, and larger central conferences would have the right to form jurisdictions within their boundaries.

In 2009 and early 2010, voters at annual conferences rejected constitutional amendments approved by the 2008 General Conference that would have formed similar regional bodies.

A model for conversation

"The key lesson of the constitutional amendments passed by the 2008 General Conference is that the church must take time to think these issues through as carefully as possible," the committee said in its report.

"The committee is proposing a model for conversation during the next (four years). This model, we hope, will stimulate proposals for action in the 2016 General Conference to change our worldwide structure," the report continues.

Ultimately, committee members said, conversation about the denomination's global nature must continue beyond next year's General Conference.

Promoting church unity

Liberia Area Bishop John G. Innis, a committee member, said he hopes next year's gathering will promote church unity.

"Let us prepare ourselves for General Conference to sing praises to God and preach a common word," he said, "so that we who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can make the world a better place."

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

Mission and Values:

With the world as our parish, the mission of the study committee is to build understanding of The United Methodist Church as a worldwide instrument of Jesus Christ. This work will be built on a foundation of careful listening and prayerful discernment for ways to build an effective connectional network to assist United Methodists as they make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



Reasons young Christians leave church

Many parents and church leaders wonder how to most effectively cultivate durable faith in the lives of young people. A five-year project headed by Barna Group president David Kinnaman explores the opportunities and challenges of faith development among teens and young adults within a rapidly shifting culture.

The research project was comprised of eight national studies, including interviews with teenagers, young adults, parents, youth pastors, and senior pastors. The study of young adults focused on those who were regular churchgoers to a Christian church during their teen years and explored their reasons for disconnection from church life after age 15.

No single reason dominated the break-up between church and young adults. Instead, a variety of reasons emerged. Overall, the research uncovered six significant themes why nearly three out of every five young Christians (59%) disconnect either permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15.

Reason 1 – Churches seem overprotective

A few of the defining characteristics of today's teens and young adults are unprecedented access to ideas and worldviews as well as prodigious consumption of popular culture.

As Christians, they express the desire for their faith in Christ to connect to the world they live in. However, much of their experience of Christianity feels stifling, fear-based

and risk-averse. One-quarter of 18- to 29-year-olds said "Christians demonize everything outside of the church" (23% indicated this "completely" or "mostly" describes their experience).

Other perceptions include "church ignoring the problems of the real world" (22%) and "my church is too concerned that movies, music, and video games are harmful" (18%).

Reason 2 – Teens' and 20-somethings' experience of Christianity is shallow

A second reason that young people depart church as young adults is that something is lacking in their experience of church. One-third said "church is boring" (31%). One-quarter of these young adults said that "faith is not relevant to my

career or interests" (24%) or that "the Bible is not taught clearly or often enough" (23%). Sadly, one-fifth of these young adults who attended a church as a teenager said that "God seems missing from my experience of church" (20%).

Reason 3 – Churches come across as antagonistic to science

One of the reasons young adults feel disconnected from church or from faith is the tension they feel between Christianity and science. The most common of the perceptions

in this arena is "Christians are too confident they know all the answers" (35%). Three out of ten young adults with a Christian background feel that "churches are out of step with the

scientific world we live in" (29%).

Another one-quarter embrace the perception that "Christianity is anti-science" (25%). And nearly the same proportion (23%) said they have "been turned off by the creation-versus-evolution debate."

Furthermore, the research shows that many science-minded young Christians are struggling to find ways of staying faithful to their beliefs and to their professional calling in science-related industries.



Reason 4 – Young Christians' church experiences related to sexuality are often simplistic, judgmental

With unfettered access to digital pornography and immersed in a culture that values hyper-sexuality over wholeness, teen and twentysomething Christians are struggling with how to live meaningful lives in terms of sex and sexuality.

One of the significant tensions for many young believers is how to live up to the church's expectations of chastity and sexual purity in this culture, especially as the age of first marriage is now commonly delayed to the late twenties.

Research indicates that most young Christians are as sexually active as their non-Christian peers, even though they are more conservative in their attitudes about sexuality.

One-sixth of young Christians (17%) said they "have made mistakes and feel judged in church because of them."

The issue of sexuality is particularly salient among 18- to 29-year-old Catholics, among whom two out of five (40%) said the church's "teachings on sexuality and birth control are out of date."

Six reasons young Christians leave church *from page 12*

Reason 5 – They wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity

Younger Americans have been shaped by a culture that esteems open-mindedness, tolerance and acceptance. Today's youth and young adults also are the most eclectic generation in American history in terms of race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, technological tools and



sources of authority. Most young adults want to find areas of common ground with each other, sometimes even if that means glossing over real differences. Three out of ten young Christians (29%) said "churches are afraid of the beliefs of other faiths" and an identical proportion felt they are "forced to choose between my faith and my friends." One-fifth of young adults with a Christian background said "church is like a country club, only for insiders" (22%).

Reason 6 – The church feels unfriendly to those who doubt

Young adults with Christian experience say the church is not a place that allows them to express doubts. They do not feel safe admitting that sometimes Christianity does not make sense. In addition, many feel that the church's response to doubt is trivial. Some of the perceptions in this regard include not being able "to ask my most pressing life questions in church" (36%) and having "significant intellectual doubts about my faith" (23%). In a related theme of how churches struggle to help young adults who feel marginalized, about one out of every six young adults with a Christian background said their faith "does not help with depression or other emotional problems" they experience (18%).



Turning toward connection with young people

David Kinnaman, who is the coauthor of the book *unChristian*, explained that "the problem of young adults dropping out of church life is particularly urgent because most churches work best for 'traditional' young adults – those whose life journeys and life questions are normal and conventional. But most young adults no longer follow the typical path of leaving home, getting an education, finding a job, getting married and having kids—all before the age of 30. These life events are being delayed, reordered, and sometimes pushed completely off the radar among today's young adults."

"Consequently, churches are not prepared to handle the 'new normal,' he said. "Instead, church leaders are most comfortable working with young, married adults, especially those with children. However, the world for young adults is changing in significant ways, such as their remarkable access to the world and worldviews via technology, their alienation from various institutions, and their skepticism toward external sources of authority, including Christianity and the Bible."

Two dangerous responses

The research points to two opposite, but equally dangerous responses by faith leaders and parents: either catering to or minimizing the concerns of the next generation.

The study suggests some leaders ignore the concerns and issues of teens and twentysomethings because they feel that the disconnection will end when young adults are older and have their own children.

Yet, this response misses the dramatic technological, social and spiritual changes that have occurred over the last 25 years and ignores the significant present-day challenges these young adults are facing.

Other churches seem to be taking the opposite corrective action by using all means possible to make their congregation appeal to teens and young adults.

However, putting the focus squarely on youth and young adults causes the church to exclude older believers and "builds the church on the preferences of young people and not on the pursuit of God," Kinnaman said.



Revitalizing ministry

Between these extremes, the just-released book "You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church and Rethinking Church" by David Kinnaman, points to ways in which the various concerns being raised by young Christians (including church dropouts) could lead to revitalized ministry and deeper connections in families.

Kinnaman observed that many churches approach generations in a hierarchical, top-down manner, rather than deploying a true team of believers of all ages.

"Cultivating intergenerational relationships is one of the most important ways in which effective faith communities are developing flourishing faith in both young and old," he said.

"In many churches, this means changing the metaphor from simply passing the baton to the next generation to a more functional, biblical picture of a body – that is, the entire community of faith, across the entire lifespan, working together to fulfill God's purposes," noted Kinnaman.

This article is from the Sept. 28 Barna Group website, www.barna.org. The Barna Group is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization. It conducts primary research, produces media resources pertaining to spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries. Reprinted with permission.

UMC mobile app *from page 7*

Methodist Communications, the global communications agency of The United Methodist Church. "The features available now are just a start. Our goal is to roll out new offerings over the coming months."

Hollon said that in early 2012, another new mobile application will be launched that will make it easier for users to connect with the United Methodist General Conference, the meeting of the denomination's top policy-making body which occurs once every four years. The 2012 meeting will take place April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

The application will allow delegates and other interested parties to track proposed legislation, keep up with scheduled events, and access information about the meeting locale.

BIRTHS

Olivia Grace Brady, daughter of Chris (Durham: Living Hope) and Carla Brady, was born on Oct. 17.

Ernest Elijah Moore, son of Greg (Raleigh: All Saints) and Molly Moore was born Oct. 15.

Wesley Aaron Muscle, son of Liz Roberts (Raleigh: Windborne) and husband Aaron, was born Oct 17.

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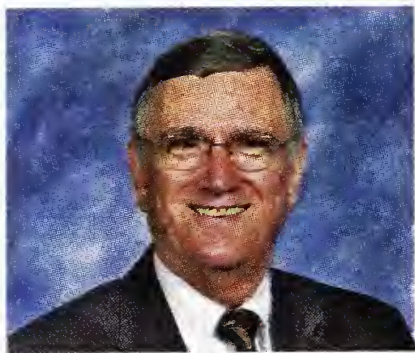
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

December 4, 2011

Text: Genesis 12:1-9

"A Blessing for All Nations"

Genesis 12:3 puts us all on the spot. In that verse, God tells Abram that what Abram does is not just for Abram and his kin, but "all the families of the earth."

Do you suppose that my actions, my decisions have a shaping influence beyond just "me and mine"?

Have you ever told someone that you recall something they said or did and they tell you that they do not recall the incident at all?

Has anyone ever said to you, "I remember what you said back then and it changed my way of thinking"—and you have no recall of ever having said such a thing?

What the Lord told Abram is true for all of us. Our words, our decisions, and our actions have influence far beyond just ourselves.

There is a shibboleth that "character is what you do when no one is looking."

How then are we to describe what we do when we realize that others are impacted? How then are we to hear God's call when that call represents not just God's concern for me but represents God's concern for all of

God's family?

Poet John Donne wrote "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main..."

Donne writes that as a description of the human condition. In a sense, God says the same thing to Abram and says it as a promise.

It is not easy to hear such a promise. It was not easy for Abram and it is not easy for us. The comfort I find in that promise really shows up a few verses later as the text describes the journey that Abram took: Haran, Shechem, Bethel, Ai, the Negeb. Abram was not there instantly.

In our day of instant gratification and instant communication, we need to hear this reminder that God's promises are on a different time table than we might expect (or hope for).

Bottom line: when God touches our lives it is not just for our own benefit. It is a promise that God's work has a ripple effect beyond us and far beyond what we might ever imagine. I dare not put a boundary on the ripple effect of God's grace.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Pamela Greenberg (*The Complete Psalms*, Bloomsbury) begins her translation of Psalm 119 this way: "Joyful are those whose path is complete, who walk in your teaching. Joyful are those who uphold your testimony; with full heart they seek you out. They do not labor for flawed

goals; they walk the path toward fulfillment."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God, You call Your people..."

December 11, 2011

Text: Genesis 15:1-21

"A Promise to Abraham"

Today is Rep Merritt's birthday. For 99.9% of the readers of this article, that fact means nothing.

For me—and maybe one or two others—it is a time to celebrate and rejoice in this delight and caring that Rep brings to those around him.

For a year and a half, Rep was my college roommate and for the past twelve years or so, we have been in regular electronic contact. (He lives in Portland, Maine.) Rep's birthday is important to me, but, truth to tell, I doubt it stirs you a great deal.

What brought all this to mind is this week's study text about Abram. The verses tell of something of great importance—God's promise to Abram to create and care for a great people (Genesis 15:5, 18)—but it is not yet an account that means much to anybody else.

Come to think of it: who would have believed Abram if he had taken out an ad in the *Jebusite Journal*?

To Abram, and maybe to a few close to him, this vision of a covenant with God is truly life transforming, but for most folks it is business as usual.

The faith community today faces something of the same circumstance. We know the good news of the saving work of Jesus Christ, but for many in our culture, it is business as usual.

I suspect that not many non-believers will come to faith unless they see in us evidence of the transforming power of Jesus Christ. When Christians live counter-cultural lives, the world may begin to take notice.

God's promise to Abram is true from the moment it is made, but only as Abram begins to act on that promise does it become a matter of significance for the larger community.

But, folks, it ain't easy. Just when one might think that Abram would rejoice at God's promise, "a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him" (Genesis 15:12).

The assurance of God's leading,

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

the pledge of God's watchfulness, and even the announcement of God's victory does not always mean sunshine and roses. The journey is still one that can bring loneliness and even emptiness.

But, child of God, hang onto the promise even when no one else around seems to care. Because God delivers on God's promises.

Oh, yes. Happy birthday, Rep.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Jan Karon's novel *Home to Holly Springs*, (Viking) one of the characters quotes seventeenth century English clergyman Jeremy Taylor: "Nothing is intolerable that is necessary...Now God hath bound thy trouble upon thee, and with purposes to reward and crown thee...."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of faithful promises..."

December 18, 2011

Text: Genesis 22:1-14

"The Lord Provides"

When my wife, Toni, died last September, I noticed something about names.

Automatically, I shifted in how I referred to her, depending on with whom I was speaking. With grandsons, I said "Mama J." With our son, I said "Mom." With her long time friend Lois, I said, "Tone Cat." With folks working on legal papers, I said "Louise." With niece Ginny I said, "Aunt Toni." With most folks, I said "Toni." And in those private moments of reflection, I referred to her by an affectionate nickname that only she and I knew. Names may well be reflective of a relationship.

What does it mean that this man we have been calling "Abram" is now called "Abraham"? In Genesis 17:5, God reveals that the name is to be changed "for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations." The name "Abram" probably means something along the lines of "exalted father." The new name—Abraham—means "father of a multitude."

It is, I think, significant that the name change occurs before the scene in this week's text.

No doubt Isaac would know his daddy as "exalted father." But now

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December Adult Bible study *continued from page 16*

in this strange story of the father's willingness to sacrifice the son (Genesis 22:1-14), the relationship is kicked up a notch. This is not just the parent of Ishmael and Isaac, this is the one through whom God will create a whole people of His own. The role and relationships of Abram/Abraham have changed. At least three great monotheistic religions—Christianity, Judaism, Islam—emerged out of those new roles and relationships. And in and through Abraham, God provides (Genesis 22:14). The word translated "provides" is *rā'āh*.

The translators of the King James Version chose a literal translation: "In the mount of the Lord, it shall be seen." Other translators have opted for a metaphorical (or what Robert Culver called "an extended") meaning: seen in the sense of understanding, enjoying, self-revealing, providing. It is a word often used to describe when a prophet "gets it." In that meaning, indeed the Lord does provide.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Literature and Theology* (Abingdon Press), Ralph C. Wood has written: "...to reject the freedom that comes with true obedience is to reject freedom itself...Christian liberty, paradoxical though it remains, is the choice to give up all other choices—and thus to live a life of trusting obedience."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your

prayer begin: "Eternal God of eternal promises, You have planted the seeds of our journey in our ancestor Abraham. You stirred in him an obedient heart. With grace You provided him what was needed. We confess our anxiety that Your schedule and timing is not the same as ours, so teach us to hear Your 'yes' even when the broken places of life whisper 'no.' Move with us as we move to our own places of obedience and give us confidence that You will even yet provide..."

December 25, 2011

Texts: Luke 1:26-56;

Galatians 3:6-18

"According to the Promise"

In this time of calling for "peace on earth, good will toward all" (Luke 2:14), we Christians have found a way to take potshots at one another. It has to do with Christmas falling on a Sunday.

The New York Times reports that a number of mega-churches cancel all worship services on Christmas Day if the 25th lands on a Sunday.

These congregations argue that this allows families to enjoy their worship at home, in a more intimate setting, remembering that God is with us wherever we are. Some even provide a DVD that can be used in each home.

"I see this in many ways as a capitulation to narcissism, the

self-centered, me-first, I'm going to put me and my immediate family first agenda of the larger culture," said Ben Witherington III, professor of New Testament interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY. "If Christianity is an evangelistic religion, then what kind of message is this sending to the larger culture - that worship is an optional extra?"

Oops.

The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) makes the painful point that the Christ has come to turn world values upside down.

Take a look at verses 51-53 and try to come away feeling comfortable. Don't think of yourself as proud (v. 51)? As powerful (v. 52)? As rich (v. 53)? The very things that are used to measure worldly success are reversed by Jesus. This little babe in the manger has come to re-arrange what is important.

The Galatians text in this week's lesson refers back to Abraham whom we have been studying in recent sessions.

Remember that the Abraham story

is about God's promise to deliver God's people. The Christmas story is about the birth of the Deliverer.

The amazing thread of God's presence weaves together what might seem as disparate stories. Just as Abraham's life was turned upside down by the inviting, loving presence of God, so Mary sings the song that celebrates how her son has come to be that inviting, loving presence.

Which world-value in your life is changed by the presence of the Christ?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Garrison Keillor (*Life Among the Lutherans*, Augsburg Books) has written: "It's a real Christmas feeling, the feeling of starting new, with fresh hope—it's hope people who celebrate Christmas are supposed to feel anyway... We wait for some spark, some inspiration to touch our hearts, something more than nostalgia."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Lord Jesus..."

CLASSIFIEDS

HOLDEN BEACH Ocean Front Condo – Pray, meditate and enjoy the beautiful view of the ocean from the covered porch of this two bedroom two bath condo (WiFi provided). Pastors and others in ministry receive a special off-season rate of \$425 per week (\$150 savings) from November through March. Contact Hobbs Realty (800) 655-3367 and refer to this ad to reserve "Our Beach Blessing" (Sea Oats Villas #106).

FOR SALE BY OWNER: 3,400 Square Foot Two Story, Brick Lake Front Home at Lake Junaluska Assembly. Four bedrooms, 3 ½ baths, 2 great rooms and fireplaces, new hardwood floors, 2 kitchens one recently installed. Use as 2 separate units or one large home. To view upstairs and exterior go to www.maggievacations.com and click on Pops Porch. Contact Sherrill Sykes at hmsykes@atmc.net.

SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom town-house, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs! Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccumc.org

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska, 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

OCEAN FRONT CONDO for rent at Villa Dunescape, Atlantic Beach, NC. Top floor with skylight, elevator access, 3 bedrooms, 2 ½ baths, 4TVs, WiFi connection, screened porch overlooks pool and ocean. Off-season rates available. Contact Sally Dillon by e-mail jesbdillon@yahoo.com or by phone (919) 931-3295 (Raleigh, NC).

EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

LAKE JUNALUSKA lakeview eff. apt. No steps! Sleeps 4, full kit. \$40 nite/\$250 wk. NP/NS. Call 828-456-5183.

The Porpoise-Given Life: Wisdom from the Cetacean Nation

A Lenten Spiritual Renewal Retreat
at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island, Georgia
March 5 - 7, 2012



Led by Rev. Dr. Chris B. Hughes

Teachings, Bible Study,
Worship, Reflection
and Renewal.



All drawing upon metaphors
of water and life among
porpoises, dolphins and
whales.

For More Information:
www.epworthbythesea.org or call 912-638-8688

PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.

calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Open Enrollment for Conference Insurance Plan Nov. 1-30

The Conference Insurance plan's Open Enrollment period is Nov. 1-30. All insurance plan participants will receive in the mail the annual packet with important information regarding this benefit. Packets will be mailed out no later than October 15th. There are changes to rates and benefits for 2012. Participants will need to decide between a Base Plan and a Buy-Up Plan. If no election is made, then the participant will be placed in the Base Plan. For questions, visit the Insurance website at <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/insurance/> or contact the Conference Benefits Team in the Treasurer's Office at 1-800-847-4433.

Health and Wholeness scholarship offered

Sabbath Star, Inc. is now receiving applications for the first scholarships from the Carol Hayes Health and Wholeness Scholarship Fund. The \$250.00 awards, available to both laity and clergy, will be made to persons wishing to enroll in Sabbath Star workshops, congregations wishing to offer Sabbath Star workshops or studies, or persons wishing to pursue other educational opportunities which promote health and wholeness. Anyone interested in additional information about or applications for the scholarship may contact Susan Harsh-Cafferty via email, sabbathstar@nccumc.org or at 82 Willow Bridge Dr., Durham, 27707.

United Methodist Student Day - Nov. 27

Helping United Methodist Students Succeed

United Methodist Student Day is Nov. 27. Participation in this Special Sunday is important to so many United Methodist students who struggle to meet the financial obligations of higher education. Gifts provide scholarships and loans for United Methodist students who might not be able to pursue higher education without this support. Offering inserts, a poster, worship resources, stories, videos and a PowerPoint presentation are available online at Student Day. Order printed offering posters and leaflets online or by calling 888-346-3862.

Commission on Evangelism offering grants - apply by Dec. 1

The Commission on Evangelism is currently accepting applications for Congress on Evangelism grants which are due by Dec. 1. Applicants must have registered for the Congress and submit accurate information as needed on the form for consideration with a complete estimate of expenses. See <http://nccumcevangelism.org/> and click on "Grants" (on the green bar near top) - then click the link on the Congress on Evangelism Grant form to access and print.

Conference offering church treasurer/finance training - Dec. 3

Local church treasurer and finance committee training will be held on Saturday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the United Methodist Building in Garner. Local church finance basics will be covered as well as updates from recent legislative changes. Local church treasurers, finance committee members and pastors are encouraged to attend. Seats are limited so registration is required. There will be a \$10 registration fee charged to help offset the cost of training materials and lunch. To register, please contact the Conference Treasurer's Office at 800-849-4433 or kwilder@nccumc.org.

Disciple Making is NOT a Program

A training event for lay and clergy will be presented by Dr. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan Leadership for The General Board of Discipleship on Jan. 13 and 14, 2012 from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm. Friday's one-day event will be repeated on Saturday. (Participants attend only one day.) This training opportunity will offer a look at small groups, a core element in the Wesleyan DNA and how John Wesley used the small group system for discipleship. It will also describe ways they can be utilized in today's church as a means of making and growing disciples.

Crum Conference set for April

The NC Annual Conference chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action will be sponsoring the 4th annual Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry on Saturday April 14, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. at Fairmont UMC in Raleigh. The main topic of discussion will be the proposed constitutional amendment on the May, 2012 ballot to ban same-sex marriage. The NC Council of Churches is a co-sponsor of this event. There will be more details to come.

conference CALENDAR

November

- 4-6 Camp Don Lee volunteer work weekend
- 5 Conference UMW DO-IT-DAY
- 8 Paying Attention to the Leader in Leadership Edenton St. UMC 9 a.m.
- 11-13 Pilgrimage
- 13-15 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference
- 18-20 UMW Leadership Training Event
- 19 5K Family Fun Run Camp Chestnut Ridge
- 26 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 27 United Methodist Student Day

December

- 3 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- Local Church Treasurer and Finance Committee training, UM Building, Garner; 10 a.m.
- 10 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 12 CCT Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- 17 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 24 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 30 Written work for Provisional Membership and Commissioning Due
- 31 Rockfish Christmas at Camp

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

North Carolina Conference Christian
ADVOCATE

Give the gift of knowledge!

Advocate subscriptions make a great gift for the United Methodists in your life.

Details online at <http://nccumc.org/advocate/>

DEATHS

HEDDEN, Jean, widow of Forrest Hedden, died Oct. 12. The service was held Oct. 15 at Pine Valley UMC, Wilmington.

Submitting Calendar Announcements

Submit Calendar Announcements for possible use in the NC Conference's weekly News Briefs emails and in the NCCC Advocate by emailing communications@nccumc.org. It is highly recommended that items be submitted a minimum of eight weeks before the event's registration deadline. Laity and clergy can also subscribe to News Briefs by emailing the address above.

MU project honors nurses who served in Vietnam War

As part of Fayetteville's Heroes Homecoming, Methodist University's Nursing Program and the Tally Leadership Center hosted a luncheon Nov. 10 to honor nurses who served in Vietnam.

"The nurses who served in Vietnam are often an overlooked group whose courage and sacrifice deserve to be remembered," said Dr. Drew Ziegler, director of the Tally Center for Leadership Development at Methodist University.

Many were involved in the planning and preparation including nursing and

leadership students. A grant from the Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County made the event possible.

Leading up to the luncheon, large poster exhibits of nurses in various situations in Vietnam were displayed across campus.

Methodist University launched its Bachelor of Science in Professional Nurse Studies last year. Currently, over 100 students are enrolled in this new major.

The Lura S. Tally Center for Leadership Development has been a part of the Methodist University campus since 1995.



Epicurean evening breaks fundraising record for children

By Jeannie Norris *

The Epicurean Evening raised a record \$65,000 for Methodist Home for Children on Sept. 1. Nearly 400 guests attended the fifth year of the event. It was held in the river-side ballroom at the Wilmington Convention Center.

Featured speaker Micheal Cox took guests on a mental tour of his own childhood on the streets, growing up in poverty, surrounded by crime, and essentially parentless. He survived his childhood and earned a Master of Social Work with the help of Methodist Home for Children.

Care for young people like Cox is funded in part by Epicurean Evening and other MHC events.

"These events succeed through the generosity of friends and businesses," said Bruce Stanley, MHC president/CEO.

In Wilmington, top chefs participate each year to support MHC's work with vulnerable children, but also to introduce their signature dishes and drinks to new diners, and compete for awards and bragging rights to culinary excellence. This year, nearly 36 chefs and businesses participated.

"The Wilmington community's support for Epicurean Evening has grown every year," said Stanley. "The chefs continue to amaze and delight with their creativity and their commitment. Our guests enjoyed an unparalleled feast of gourmet food, which delighted their palates and nourished their bodies. Then they had their hearts and souls nourished by hearing first-person testimony how their generous financial support changes lives like Micheal's. It's an incredible event."

WECT-TV anchor Frances Weller returned as Epicurean Evening host, and the cast of Discovery Channel's Swamp Loggers added star power with Celebrity Chef David Mueller speaking about his experience with adoption. Michelle Li, anchor and reporter for WSFX and WECT, shared her own story of adoption.

Eight participating chefs and businesses won Epicurean Evening awards for 2011: Ruth's Chris Steak House and Chef Chris Jewel won the Copper Kettle Best in Show and Best Taste for a sliced tenderloin, served medium rare with horseradish cream sauce and remoulade dressing, and assorted rolls. Jewel also served creamed spinach and a miniature

banana cream tart.

The Wilmington Convention Center and Chef Scott Frazzetta won People's Choice for a lump crab cake with fresh ginger and a Grey Goose vodka remoulade over purple sweet potatoes and grilled corn.

Cameo 1900 and Chef Kirsten Mitchell won Best Entrée for a three-cheese macaroni and cheese with poblano peppers and "dewey" sausage, and smoked tenderloin on a waffle chip with chimichurri sauce.

Mixto and Chef Trinity Hunt took the Best Appetizer for Oaxacan pork tostada with cocoa-chile braised pulled pork.

The mother-daughter team at Carolina Candy Co.—Kimberly Smith with Lauren and Brooke—won Best Dessert with three hand-crafted toffees: Tarheel, with milk chocolate and almonds; Dark Chocolate Southern Pecan; and Hawaiian Blizzard, with white chocolate, coconut and macadamia nuts.

Coastal Beverage Co. and Sales Manager Leon Chisholm won Best Beverage with Hoptober, a fall seasonal golden ale from New Belgium Brewery in Fort Collins, Colo.

EAST oceanfront dining, with Chef Mark Lawson and designer Terry



Host Frances Weller, WECT-TV anchor, is on-air with Event Chair Missy Sumrell and Celebrity Chef David Mueller

Allred, won Best Table Decoration for a seascape setting. Their table was draped in turquoise and overlaid with a bed of red rocks, large barnacles and live fish swimming in glass tubes. Tropical greenery with peach anthurium finished the table, where Lawson served a chilled seafood trio (crab gazpacho, citrus microgreens with poached shrimp and mango vinaigrette, and a petit lobster roll).

The Chef's Academy and Chef Eric Gephart won Best Food Presentation for a Spanish style chorizo-stuffed suckling pig and pork bellies, served with a small salad of cucumber and apple, microgreens with cherry vinaigrette, and smoked paprika aioli.

Each year, MHC serves about 1,400 North Carolina children and young people, including more than 150 in New Hanover County.

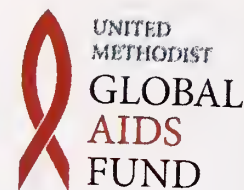
In addition to foster care and adoption, its services include group homes for juvenile offenders, higher education scholarships, family preservation, gang prevention, family drug treatment, early childhood care and mental health services.

* By Jeannie Norris, MHC director of communication.

Church Mice



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"O God, whose Son went everywhere healing and caring for the sick and the marginalized: help us to overcome our own fears and biases. Enable us to reach out in loving compassion to all those in need. Let us not be like the unjust judge, but more like the widow who refused to take 'no' for an answer. In Christ's name, Amen."

— Dr. Donald E. Messer, United Methodist Church Global AIDS Fund Committee Chair, Centennial, CO.

New '40 Days of Prayer' resource offered to commemorate World AIDS Day, Dec. 1

Observing World AIDS Day is a time for religious worship services focusing on intercessory and healing prayer, hope in God, and love and compassion in the midst of this pandemic.

A free, downloadable resource is available that offers 40 daily devotions leading up to World AIDS Day, typically observed Dec. 1.

"40 Days of Prayers for Persons Affected & Living with HIV & AIDS" is a joint effort of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee and the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS).

Approximately 33 million persons are infected with HIV, and 2.2 million new infections are reported annually. "40 Days of Prayer" offers a compilation of prayers, reflections and stories by members of the UM Global AIDS Fund Committee, the GBGS Board of Directors and persons living with or ministering to those with

HIV & AIDS.

"This resource is ideal for use by individuals and/or small groups in their daily prayer life as a way of lifting prayers to God about one of the worst health crises facing humanity," said Dr. Donald Messer, chair of the UM Global AIDS Fund Committee.

"Each year, more than 16 million children are orphaned due to their parents dying of AIDS. This denomination is slowly but surely coming out of its sleep and awakening to the fact that it needs to take action," he said.

Messer, who has been addressing the issue of HIV & AIDS for decades, said the new resource will foster reflection about the pandemic and discernment on how to take action.

The United Methodist Church encourages its congregations to commemorate World AIDS Day with "special programs on HIV & AIDS education and religious worship

services that focus on intercessory and healing prayer, hope in god and love and compassion" (#3242, *Book of Resolutions*).

"40 Days of Prayer" enables placing short devotionals in Sunday bulletins, provides information and stories for preaching on AIDS and/or working with community health organizations.

"We are pleased to offer this resource to local churches as a way to prayerfully lift up our concerns about this disease that is killing thousands of men, women and children daily," said Linda Bales Todd, GBGS staff representative to the UM Global AIDS Fund Committee.

"This resource can be used at any time during the year as a prayerful pilgrimage with God," she said.

The devotional resource can be found and other HIV & AIDS-related resources are available through the GBGS online store at <http://www.>

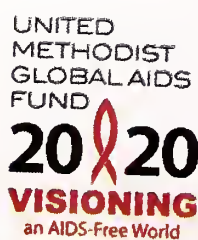
[umc-gbcs.org/store](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/store).

The UM Global AIDS Fund also offers a link to the devotional in the Resources section of the website 2020 Visioning an AIDS-Free World at <http://www.2020aidsfreeworld.org>.

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund is an Advance Special Project providing funding to AIDS-related projects around the globe. Find out more at <http://www.2020aidsfreeworld.org> or send an email to 2020AIDSFreeWorld@gmail.com; phone: (918) 289-1274 or (703) 282-6254.

Make monetary contributions to the fund online at <http://www.givetomission.org>. Gifts can also be made through the local church or by mailing a check to United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087.

Make sure to indicate the Advance Special number for the Fund: #982345.



"People are dying. They are dying every day, every hour, every minute and literally every second. They are children, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, and they are dying." — The UM Council of Bishops, 2006

Perfect 20/20 vision requires more than seeing, it requires action. The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund is working toward an AIDS-free world by providing a tangible response to the worldwide HIV/AIDS crisis. Through 20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World, United Methodists and friends can stop the transmission of HIV from mother to child, teach young adults about HIV prevention, and

feed an HIV-positive person so they can take their medicine and lead a productive life. For a commitment of \$20 a month or more until the year 2020, help put a stop to HIV/AIDS in the world.

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund supports education, prevention, care, and treatment programs for people living with HIV/AIDS around the world. The Fund currently supports 175 HIV/AIDS church-oriented and Christ-centered ministries in 37 countries, including the United States. Through the plan, 25 percent of what each annual conference raises should be used in that conference for AIDS work, either locally or in global projects.

Other Resources for Churches

UMCOR - HIV/AIDS fact sheets, bulletin inserts, videos, slideshows

<http://new.gbgs-umc.org/umcor/work/health/resources/>

General Board of Church and Society - Biblical context, newsletter and bulletin information, ideas on ways for churches to take action

<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/aids>



Bishops
 address
 same-sex
 union ban
 Pages 4-5

N87c



Pilgrimage 2011

WORKING

with
 AND
 for
 God

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 N87c
 Oct 2011

Speak
 the Life

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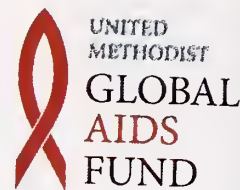
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2012 Mission and Service Commitments

North Carolina Conference
 of The United Methodist Church

One of the ways that youth can get
 involved in Pilgrimage is with the
 Pilgrimage House Band—the primary
 music group which serves as the
 music leaders for each of the four
 worship services. Other than the adult
 leadership, the House Band is made up
 entirely of youth from across the NC
 Conference. Shown singing at right are
 some of the band members including
 (L-R) Ashley Martin, Julia Lopp, Hunter
 Rae Houston, and Erin Stowe.

The Rev. Adam Seate (far left) and Jay
 Locklear (center) penned the theme
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 Out of darkness we have come, And
 Your Spirit leads us home!"



"O God, whose Son went everywhere healing and caring for the sick and the marginalized: help us to overcome our own fears and biases. Enable us to reach out in loving compassion to all those in need. Let us not be like the unjust judge, but more like the widow who refused to take 'no' for an answer. In

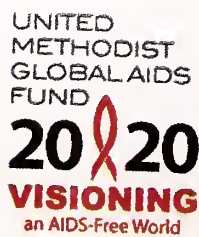
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Other Resources for Churches

"People are dying in minute and literal numbers, fathers, sisters, brothers. The UM Council on Christian Unity and World Peace 20/20 vision: The United Methodist free world by providing AIDS crisis. Through Methodists and their mother to child,

UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

General Board of Church & Society newsletter and

FROM THE BISHOP

Dear Friends,

Christians through the centuries have traditionally begun their written communications to one another with the salutation, "Grace and peace to you."

This salutation carries with it an extremely important concept! Namely, all of life is dependent on God's grace and mercy.

As the Scriptures say, "We live and move and have our being in Him." Everything we have, including life itself, is a gift from Him!

This greeting helps Christians always remember this most important truth.

The second part of the greeting is likewise powerful in its meaning. Having peace for Christians was not just having harmony or experiencing tranquility due to the absence of conflict or difficulty.

The peace that comes from God the Hebrews called Shalom. Shalom meant a peace that is not dependent on circumstances or conditions. It was an inner state of confidence and tranquility even if the outer circumstances were chaotic and uncertain, because God was in control!

This peace as the Scripture says, "The world cannot give and the world cannot take away," is a special greeting that helps Christians remember to live in this powerful truth!

It is in this magnificent truth that I greet you as I write to you about the work we are doing together in His name.

As this Christian greeting properly aligns our thinking, we know our work is done in His mercy

and strength (so nothing is too hard), our work is done with Him (so it is delightful and pleasant) and our work is done for Him (so nothing is too costly).

I share this thought with you because I know it is easy to forget WHY we do WHAT we do!



Bishop Al Gwinn

WHEN that happens we end up doing our work in our own strength, often feeling overwhelmed, weary and limited, and do not have the delight and sense of privilege to be partnering with Him, the Ruler of the Universe. Our work becomes hard, burdensome and joyless. Our perspectives are narrow. Our resources are limited. Our visions are tamed. Our dreams are colorless. Our goals are dwarfed.

God's intention is that we work WITH Him and FOR Him.

May this be a year when we truly "let go and let God"—when we experience Shalom as we relax in His strength, when we are renewed by His presence and when we are empowered by His Spirit.

And, may we take delight in our work together as United Methodists living and moving and having our being in Him!

Grace and Peace to You,

Bishop Al Gwinn



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

NB7c

Pilgrimage 2011



Look at where your gift
of one dollar goes*

1	Other Apportionments	0.49%
2	Second Mile Giving	1.30%
3	Past Service Liability	1.71%
4	World Service and Connectional Ministries	8.29%
5	Your Local Church Expenses	88.21%

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Speak
the Life

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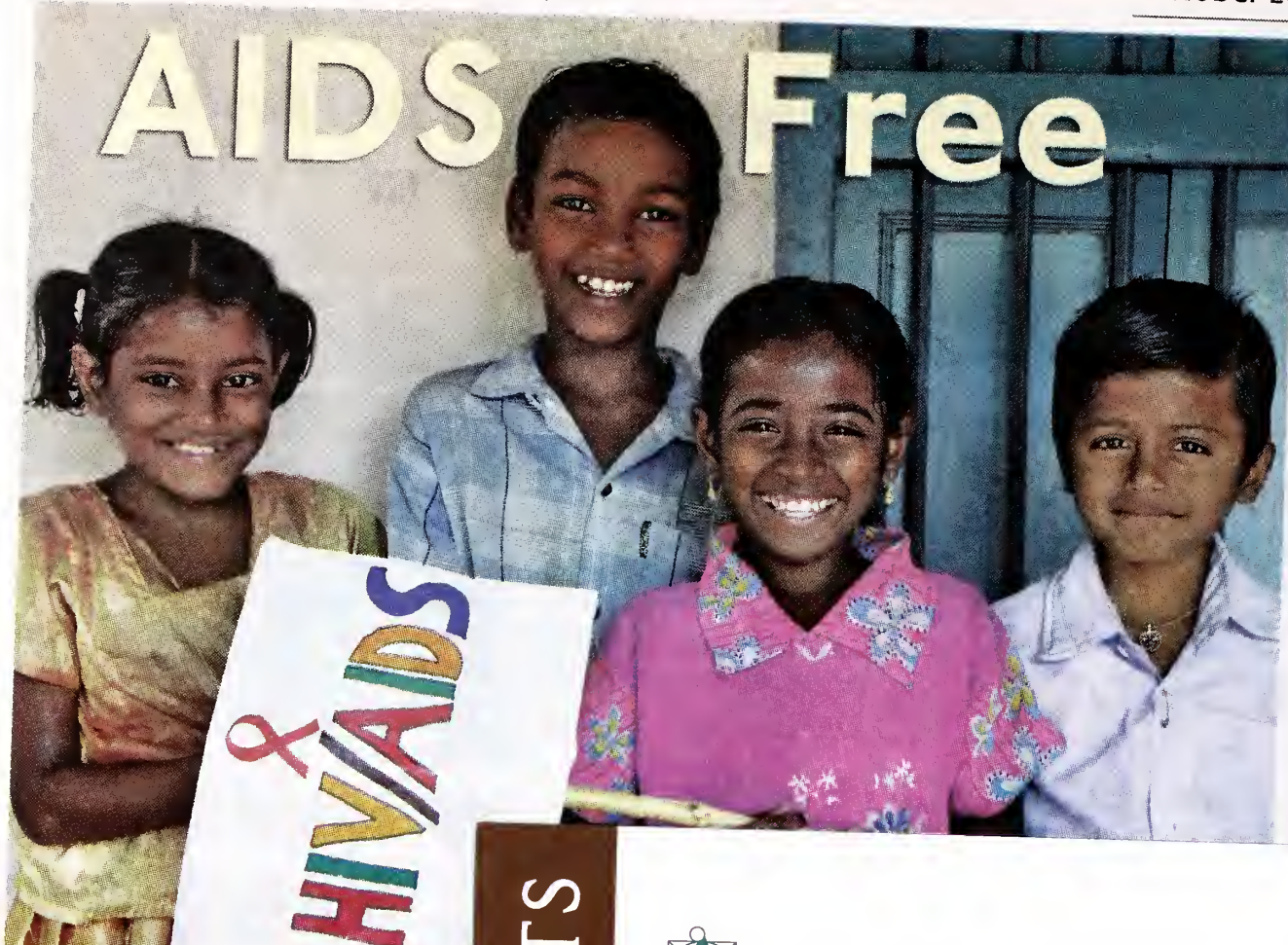
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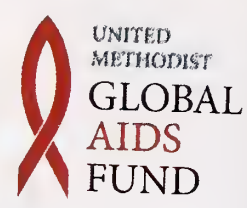
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88.21% of every dollar you give stays in your local church and is spent as follows:

- 40.79% Local Church Programs, Operating Expenses, and Benevolences:**
These funds are expended for operational needs such as utilities, building maintenance, salaries and benefits, office supplies, local programs such as Sunday Schools and youth activities, and local benevolences.
- 24.23% Local Pastor(s) Salaries and Benefits:**
This item reflects the compensation paid to the local church's pastor or pastors in the form of salary, travel, utilities, and continuing education allowances. It also represents the church's portion of pension payments on behalf of its pastor(s) and supplemental benefits for items such as hospitalization and life insurance.
- 23.19% Local Building and Debt Retirement:**
This represents capital improvements, mortgages, and debt retirements related to local church buildings and property. Building programs and other capital investments unique to each church are not included in calculating conference apportionments.



AIDS Free



“O God, whose Son went everywhere healing and caring for the sick and the marginalized: help us to overcome our own fears and biases. Enable us to reach out in loving compassion to all those in need. Let us not be like the unjust judge, but more like the widow who refused to take ‘no’ for an answer. In

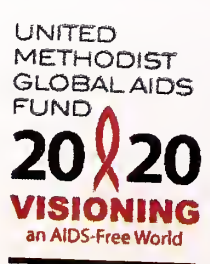
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UMCOR - HIV/A

General Board newsletter and

APPORTIONMENTS

Apportionment Formula

The apportionment formula is approved by each Annual Conference session and is based on how a church spends money.

The base amount of local church expenses is calculated by adding up all expenditures reported on Table II and then subtracting exclusions (as listed below).

Each church’s base is then compared to the total of all base amounts for all other churches and the budget approved at the last Annual Conference is distributed to each church using the same ratio.

Unadjusted apportionments will not increase more than 15% from the previous year.

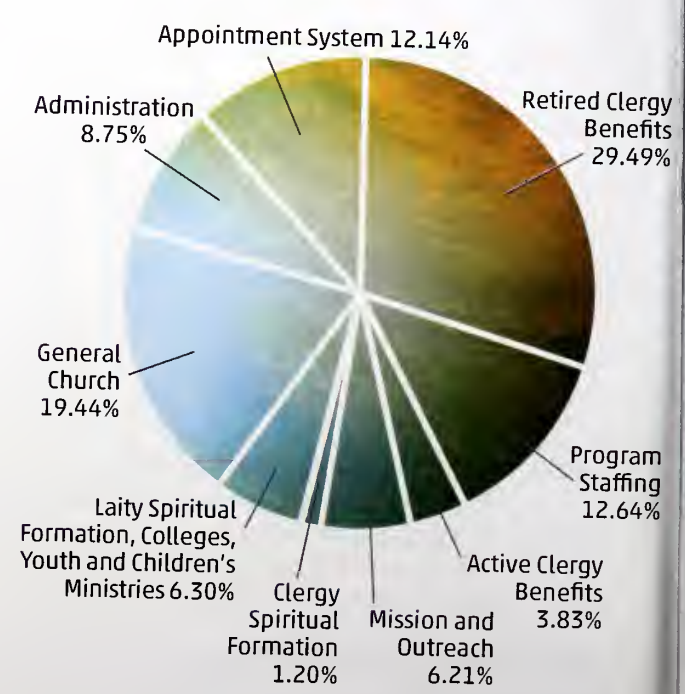
The exclusions are: Payments on World Service and Connectional Ministries, Past Service Liability-Pensions, Episcopal Fund and all other apportionments; district work fund; principal and interest on indebtedness; buildings and improvements; 50% of property insurance; local benevolences paid directly by the church; General and Conference Advance Specials; Ten Dollar Club; up to \$4,500 for travel paid by a charge for each pastor; United Methodist Student Day; Human Relations Day; Peace with Justice Sunday; Native American Awareness Sunday; One Great Hour of Sharing; World Communion Sunday; UMW Funds sent to district and conference treasurer; housing allowance paid in lieu of furnished parsonage to a minister serving under Episcopal appointment in a charge of the conference; offerings taken for disasters as designated by the Disaster Response Committee and the Resident Bishop.

2013 North Carolina Annual Conference Budget To Be Raised in 2012



North Carolina Annual Conference 2013 Budget Distribution

In 2010, 805 churches in the NC Conference, with a total membership of 232,312, spent \$179,489,814 for all causes. This translates to \$772.62 per member. Based on these disbursements, the 2013 Budget (which is funded by 2012 apportionments) is as follows:





Bishops
address
same-sex
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Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



Speak
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MISSION AND SERVICE NEEDS

Mission & Service Needs

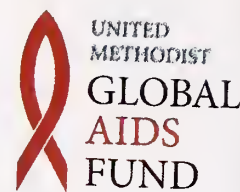
To Be Raised in 2012 for 2013

Totals by Conference	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
General Conference	\$ 3,802,457	18.69%	-1.60%
Jurisdictional Conference	\$ 153,391	0.75%	0.00%
Pensions & Conference Claimants	\$ 6,000,000	29.49%	0.00%
Annual Conference	\$10,389,199	51.07%	0.59%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$20,345,047	100.00%	0.00%

Totals by Program or Ministry Area	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries			
** World Service	\$ 1,961,235	9.64%	-2.62%
NCC Connectional Ministries	\$ 14,117,284	69.39%	0.26%
** Past Service Liability-Pensions	\$ 3,300,000	16.22%	0.00%
** Episcopal Fund	\$ 597,400	2.94%	5.69%
** Africa University Fund	\$ 58,086	0.29%	-4.37%
** Black College Fund	\$ 259,535	1.28%	-4.37%
** Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	\$ 51,507	0.25%	-2.85%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$20,345,047	100.00%	0.00%

Further details on the Program and Ministry areas
are available on pages 6-10.

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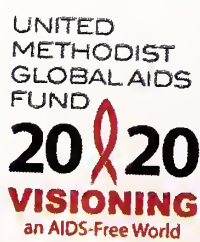
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Other Resources for Churches

"People are dying minute and literate fathers, sisters, brothers. The UM Council of Perfect 20/20 vision. The United Methodist free world by providing AIDS crisis. Through Methodists and mother to child,

UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

General Board newsletter and

MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS

Mission & Service Commitments

World Service Fund & NCC Connectional Ministries

World Service Fund **

The World Service Fund is the basic benevolence fund of the Church, designated in *The Book of Discipline* as "the first benevolent responsibility of the Church" (paragraph 812). Receipts are distributed to the general program agencies and other benevolent causes by a precise formula. These agencies resource local churches and extended local church mission nationally and internationally. The World Service Fund allows United Methodists to participate in meaningful ways in God's mission throughout the world.

Total World Service Fund:.....\$1,961,235

NC Annual Conference Connectional Ministries

Outreach Ministry Team

Serves to carry forth ministry that transforms the world

Asbury Homes.....\$5,000
Assists with administrative expenses.

Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries\$13,450
Development and coordination of ministries in jails and prisons and advocacy for prison reform.

DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries.....\$30,000
Carries DISCIPLE Bible Study into our state's prisons and smaller churches.

Disaster Response\$10,000
Provides organization, training, oversight of United Methodist disaster response.

Methodist Home for Children\$200,000
Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

Methodist Retirement Homes\$200,000
Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

Golden Cross Fund\$15,100
Assists in payment of hospital bills, physicians, medicine and other medical expenses for laypersons with special needs.

Missions and Outreach.....\$491,600
Provides salary support for Church and Community workers. Funds mission projects, rural and urban ministries, assists minority churches, administers building loans and grants to local churches, and interprets missions programs.



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



You Speak the Life

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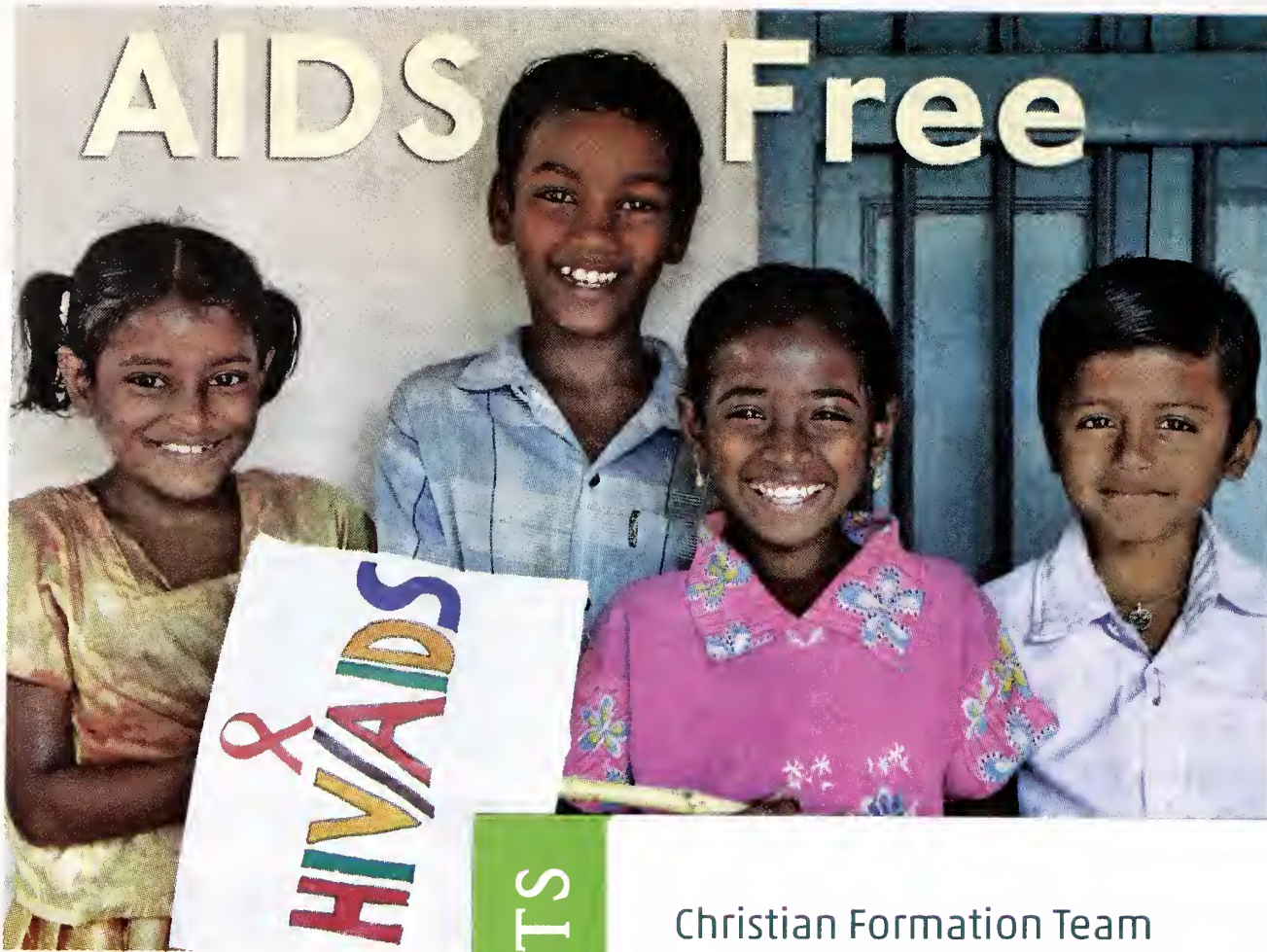
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MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS

Board of Institutions \$750 Reviews and supports the conference relationship with institutions to whom the conference is related "by faith": camps, Methodist Home for Children, Asbury Homes, Methodist Retirement Homes, UM Foundation, and the colleges.	Bishop's Days Apart \$9,000 Bishop's program for renewal of clergy leadership.
Disability Concerns \$2,350 Task force created to support the Commission on Disability Concerns.	Laity \$28,000 Promotes training for laypersons serving as leaders in the church and community; leadership training workshops, district and conference rallies, and programs.
Refugee and Immigration \$8,000 Assists with refugee resettlement and interpretation of immigration policy.	Committee on Episcopacy \$1,200 Serves as support and advisory group on matters related to episcopal leadership.
	Office of the Bishop \$31,000 Operations supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.
	District Superintendents Fund Salaries and Benefits..... \$1,528,686 Travel..... \$109,000 Cabinet Meeting Expenses \$40,000
	Cabinet Discretionary Fund..... \$5,000
	Bishop's Discretionary Fund..... \$2,000 Funds for use by bishop for emergencies or other needs not funded.
	Director of Ministerial Relations Salaries and Benefits..... \$348,611 Salaries and benefits for three persons.
	Office \$24,500 Office expenses, travel, telephone.
	Christian Unity \$7,000 Interprets, advocates, works for unity of the Christian church; encourages dialogue, cooperation.
	NC Council of Churches..... \$18,000 Promotes Christian Unity, interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and advocates for social justice in our State Legislature.
	Effective Ministry Program..... \$25,000 Assists in pastors' salaries during medical or other urgent conditions and transition.
	NCC Staff Relations Committee \$1,300 Supports meeting expenses of the personnel committee for the conference staff.
	Nominations..... \$1,000 Supports meeting expenses of the conference Nominations Committee.
Leadership Team Serves to equip leaders who implement the Vision	
Multicultural Ministries Team..... \$14,000 Strengthens local churches reaching out to racial ethnic people and building bridges among races.	
Multicultural Ministries Grants \$50,000 Provides grants for ministries of inclusiveness in districts and local churches.	
Multicultural Ministries Programs..... \$113,800 Provides program funds for conference ministries of inclusiveness.	
Monitoring and Accountability \$3,550 Monitors for inclusiveness in regard to gender, ethnicity, age, and handicapping conditions.	
** Ministerial Education Fund..... \$650,701 Assists in the education and training of clergy and diaconal ministers in our conference.	
Board of Ordained/ Diaconal Ministry..... \$212,000 Funds enlistment, preparation, examination, continuing education and career development for persons serving in ordained ministry and continues relationships with diaconal ministers.	
Board of Ordained Ministry: Sexual Ethics Program..... \$18,000 Funds one position to provide training or clergy and churches regarding sexual ethics.	
Seminary Visitation \$5,000 Assists in maintaining contact with clergy candidates and in sharing opportunities available in the ordained ministry in NC Conference.	



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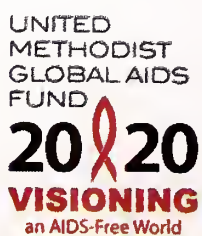
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Methodists and
mother to child,

UMCOR - HIV/A
General Board
newsletter and

MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS

Christian Formation Team

Serves to form & nurture
disciples of Jesus Christ

Evangelism\$95,600
Promotes evangelism programs and ministries.
Provides training and resources to local churches
and districts.

Church & Society\$12,250
Relates the gospel of Jesus Christ to people and
to the structures of the communities, nation and
world in which they live, and develops programs
which provide education and action on issues
confronting the Church consistent with the
Social Principles and the policies adopted by the
General Conference.

Spiritual Life.....\$13,000
Provides opportunities for persons to grow in
faith through spiritual disciplines.

Worship\$5,200
Designs worship for Annual Conference, and
offers worship training for local congregations.

Higher Education
and Campus Ministry.....\$7,000
Provides support for campus ministries, admin-
isters scholarships, connects colleges and the
local church.

College Chaplaincy Support.....\$275,000
Assists Louisburg College, Methodist University,
N.C. Wesleyan College, Duke Divinity School,
High Point University, Greensboro College, and
Bennett College.

College Chaplaincy Support -Reserve..... \$68,750
Provides reserve for transitioning College
Chaplaincy Support budget line to be raised in
advance.

Campus Ministry\$501,000
Supports United Methodist ministry on cam-
puses in the NC Conference through Wesley
Foundations and Fellowships, and ecumenical
campus ministries.

Young Adults.....\$4,000
Supports meetings and work of Young Adult
Ministries Council, resources for local church
young adult ministry, financial assistance for
those attending Church-related young adult
ministry offerings.

Youth Ministry.....\$60,300
Supports meetings and work of Council on Youth
Ministries and seed money for events such as
Global Vision, Kaleidoscope, Rally Day, Summer

Breakaway, Appalachian Trail Hike, Annual Con-
ference Session for Youth, and Pilgrimage.

Children’s Ministries.....\$19,450
Supports meetings and programs of Children’s
Ministry Team including curriculum resource
team, scholarships, continuing education events,
and workshops. Also funds Conference Safe
Sanctuaries Committee meetings, resources,
and training events.

Older Adult Ministry\$7,000
Supports programs and training by providing
resources and information about the needs and
issues concerning aging.

NCCUM Camp & Retreat
Ministries, Inc.\$275,000
Provides funding to support the administrative
oversight of Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee, and Rock-
fish Camp and Retreat Centers.

Education and Nurture\$3,200
Strengthens and develops local church minis-
tries of Christian nurture.

Emerging Church Support.....\$854,200
Provides salaries, housing, and benefits for pas-
tors of new churches and administration of the
Office of New Faith Communities.

New Faith Communities
Salaries and Benefits.....\$229,977
Salaries/benefits for two staff and additional
part-time administrative assistance as needed.
Office Expenses\$64,200
Office expenses and travel.

Stewardship Team

Serves to empower ministry

Stewardship\$15,000
Interprets stewardship theologically, promotes
stewardship education and programs.

Annual Conference Expense\$200,000
Housing, food, and other expenses for the
Annual Conference session of over 2,300 mem-
bers (lay and clergy).

Annual Conference Registrar
Salary & Benefits.....\$4,000

Conference Secretary’s Office
Salaries and Benefits.....\$92,446
Provides for full-time clerical assistance, a sti-
pend for the conference secretary.
Office Expenses\$19,000



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

N37c

Pilgrimage 2011



Conference Journal/Printing.....\$35,000

Provides for the cost of producing the Conference Journal, directory, and Book of Recommendations.

Communications\$88,500

Resources for interpretive materials such as this publication, news releases, news media relations, Rethink Church, production of Saddlebag at Annual Conference, Audio/Visual support at Annual Conference, electronic equipment purchase and maintenance, video production, e-mail communications, video streaming and webinars, website nccumc.org, and local church assistance with web page design and support.

Publications: NCC Christian Advocate.....\$30,000

Provides a subscription for every NC conference pastor and widow/er and additional support for the newspaper published by the conference.

**General Administration.....\$223,993

The General Conference, World Methodist Council, Judicial Council, General Commission on Archives & History, and in part, the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Pension, and special litigation costs.

**SEJ Mission & Ministry.....\$153,391

Supports a cooperative ministry to United Methodists in the Southeast including SEJ Jurisdictional Conference, Lake Junaluska, and Jurisdictional Council expenses.

Conference Treasurer's Office

Salaries and Benefits.....\$744,102

Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of ten full or part-time staff, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.

Office.....\$197,860

Operating expenses of conference treasurer's office and statistician, including annual audit.

Treasurer Bonding & Insurance.....\$10,790

A conference-held bond covering designated financial officers in the local church.

Information Management

Salaries and Benefits.....\$205,942

Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of three full or part-time staff, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.

Office.....\$74,300

Provides funding for the management and

maintenance of the NC Conference information technology infrastructure, including computer hardware, software, and network administration.

Conference Board of Trustees\$1,750

Funds meetings and work of this board.

Contingency Fund\$15,000

Provides for unanticipated needs; administered by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

**Methodist Building

Operating Fund\$175,000

**Methodist Building

Capital Fund\$200,000

Episcopal Residence\$15,000

Maintenance supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.

Staff Housing\$84,760

Provides housing for four clergy positions of the Annual Conference.

Legal Counsel\$20,000

Provides for conference legal expenses not funded by a particular board or agency.

Committee on Equitable

Compensation.....\$130,000

Provides funding to supplement salaries paid by local churches to ensure at least base salary levels are paid as determined by the Annual Conference.

Minister's Moving Expense\$185,000

Assists in the moving expenses of pastors.

Joint Committee on Incapacity\$440,000

Provides funding for assistance with health and life insurance and transitional grants for clergy who temporarily cannot serve due to incapacity.

Conference Claimants -

Retiree Insurance\$2,700,000

Supports health insurance for our retired clergy and dependents of deceased clergy.

Incoming WATS Line.....\$4,200

Funding for toll-free WATS line calls to the United Methodist Building in Garner from within the state of North Carolina.

General & Jurisdictional

Conferences\$30,000

Expenses for General and Jurisdictional conferences and funding for electronic balloting costs.

MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS



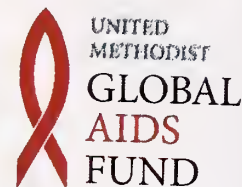
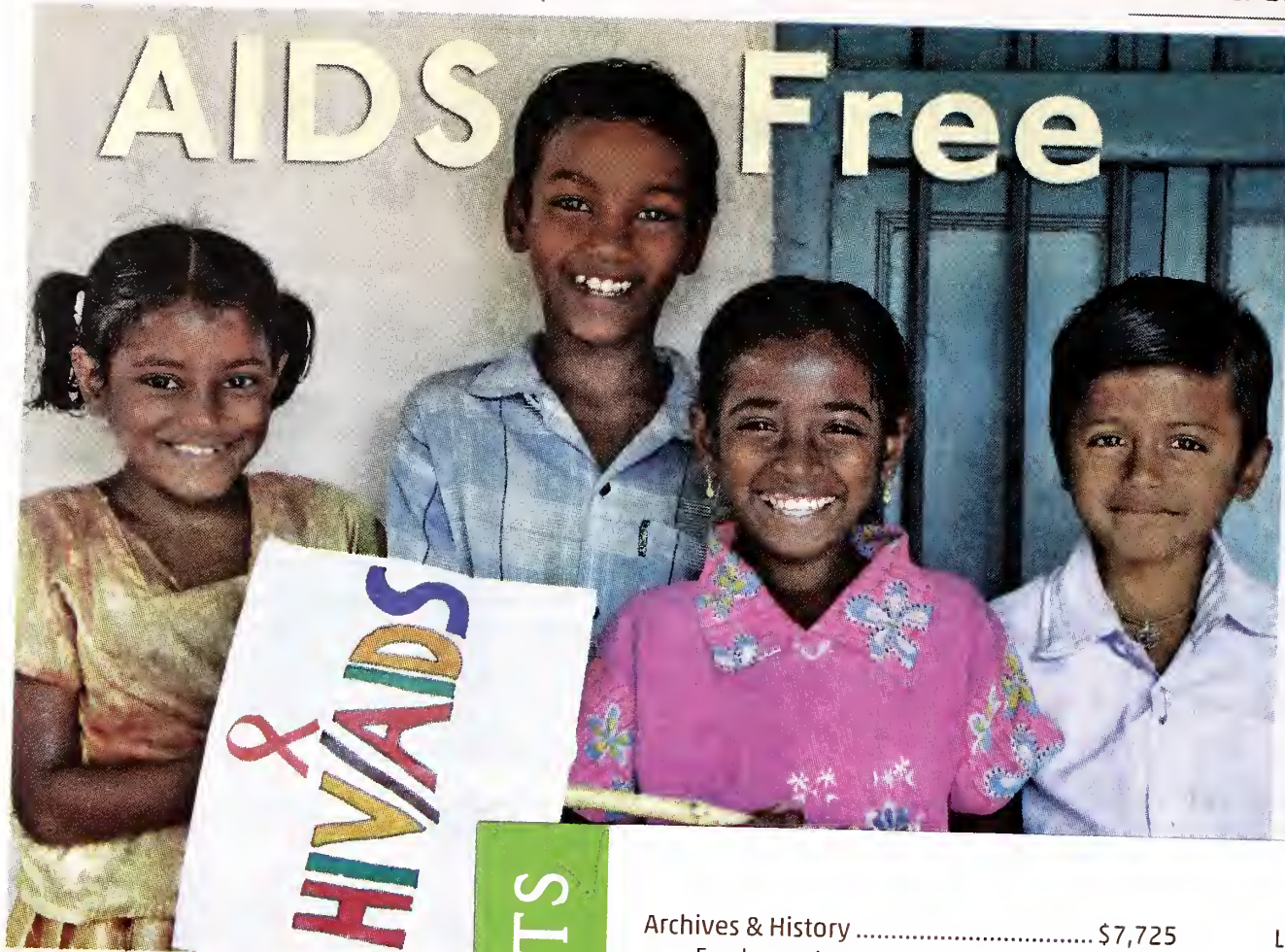
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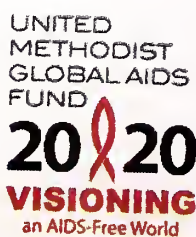
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MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS

Archives & History	\$7,725
Funds meeting expenses for commission, maintains records and history of conference.	
Conference Media Center.....	\$6,375
Provides ongoing support for operations in the conference Media Center.	
Conference Connectional Ministries	
Staff Salaries and Benefits.....	\$1,162,175
Represents a ministry and support staff of 12 persons, their salaries, hospitalization insurance, lay staff pensions, Social Security, travel, etc.	

Total NCC Connectional Ministries\$ 14,117,284
Total World Service & Connectional Ministries:.. \$16,078,519

Other Program Areas

Black College Fund **

This fund supplements operational and capital needs of 10 black colleges, including Bennett College in Greensboro and one medical school, which have provided leadership to the church and nation.

Total\$259,535

Episcopal Fund **

Covers salaries and expenses of active United Methodist bishops and dependents, retired bishops and surviving spouses.

Total\$597,400

Africa University **

The development of a United Methodist university in Zimbabwe. This university provides theological and other educational programs on the continent where United Methodism is experiencing its fastest growth.

Total\$58,086

Past Service Liability **

Applies toward the unfunded (pre-1982) pension liability for pastors.

Total\$3,300,000

Interdenominational Cooperation Fund **

Supports those general church activities which are ecumenical in nature. This is United Methodism in mission with other Christian communities witnessing in the world.

Total\$51,507

**Grand Total
all funds:
\$20,345,625**

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North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 156, No. 11

December 2011



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



Rainbow Covenant Advance Specials

To be a Rainbow Covenant Church, a local church needs to meet the "first mile" by paying in full apportionments as set by Annual Conference. Then each local church is asked to support at least one project in each of the five lanes of the Rainbow Covenant.

Each lane reminds the local church that it has touched persons with the love of God in its own community, in the broader areas of the Conference, on a national level, and throughout the world.

Rainbow Covenant Lanes

The lanes are organized so that churches can connect persons in mission and the projects with which they are involved. The lanes are:

- Lane One: Persons in Mission *
- Lane Two: Conference Advances
- Lane Three: National Missions
- Lane Four: World Missions
- Lane Five: UMCOR

Persons in Mission *

In Lane One are persons in mission supported by the NC Conference and the General Board of Global Ministries. They serve on the ground throughout the world and are the hands and feet of Christ. Some of them work locally in this conference area. Others work in other parts of the nation. Still others work in other countries. All have valid ministries and all have valid needs.

Local churches are encouraged to be involved with the various missionaries that the NC Conference supports. Several persons in mission are not commissioned missionaries through the General Board of Global Mission; yet they still need funds to advance their ministry. (These persons are designated with "S" in their identification code which shows that they are a part of a Conference Advance).

For more information about the GBGM missionaries, go to the website: www.gbgm-umc.org/missionaries. All persons in missions appreciate prayers, cards, letters and emails. Contact information is on the GBGM website.

Covenant Relationships

All gifts and contributions share the love of Jesus Christ by supporting missionaries who work to offer

hope and alleviate human suffering. Generous one-time gifts make this service possible. Congregations and individuals are also encouraged to support missionaries through Covenant Relationships.

The standard covenant relationship for a local church to support a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionary is \$2500 annually or \$5 per church member per year.

However, this partnership is much more than a financial commitment. It is a dynamic relationship where the church and missionary pray for one another and communicate regularly.

By deepening its own awareness of the struggles and triumphs of the missionary, congregations participate in a work that is truly connectional.

To learn more about covenant relationships, contact the Conference Missions Team Secretary, Bill Haddock (revbillh@nccumc.org) or <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/advance/missionaries/covenant/>

Advance Specials

GBGM ADVANCE for Christ projects are General Advance Specials. There are also Conference Advance Specials approved by the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Both types of Advance Specials are assigned numbers which should be recorded on the remittance sheets turned into the Conference Treasurer with the contribution check.

Remittances for General Advance Specials can also be made on-line at the General Board of Global Ministries website at www.gbgm-umc.org. Contact the Conference Treasurer to make electronic transfers to that office.

At the end of the fiscal year, please fill out the form at the end of this section and send it to the District Mission Secretary who will issue the Rainbow Covenant Form to the participating local churches. Remember that all remittances need to be sent to the Conference Treasurer or to the General Board of Global Ministries, not to the district secretaries.

This list is not inclusive: any missionary or any ADVANCE Special can be supported by local churches or individuals.

The Conference Missions website, at <http://nccumc.org/missions/> has a number of ADVANCE specials that local churches and individuals support.

RAINBOW COVENANT

You Speak the Life

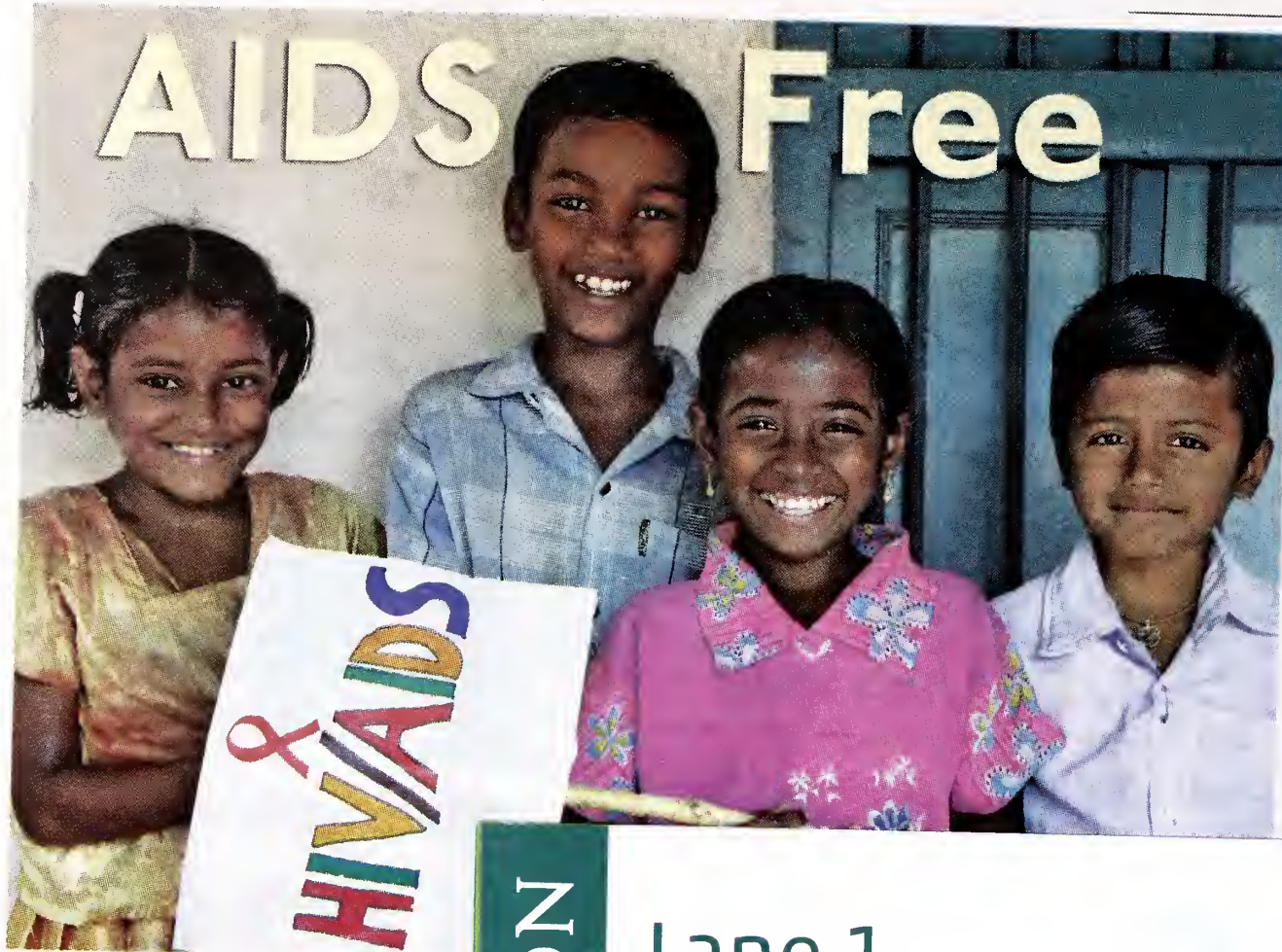
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PERSONS IN MISSION

Lane 1

Persons in Mission

The NCC Missions Team recommends Salary Support for the following missionaries. Each missionary listed below serves with one or more projects denoted in the paragraph following the missionary's name.

MOZART ADEVU (#13996Z) West Africa

Mozart is a GBGM missionary serving as the Africa Regional Coordinator for the sustainable Agriculture and Development Program for UMCOR. He focuses on training farmers in Liberia. He currently serves as Chair of the Moringa Association of Ghana which promotes the nutritional properties of Moringa and has spearheaded the development of the first ever standards on the production and processing of Moringa. Contact information—Email: madevu1201@yahoo.com

Related Lane 4: World Missions

Tractors for Missions Stations #S-00229
Support for Agricultural Self-Sustainability #S-00232
Purchase of Tools #S00233
Sustainable Agriculture & Development #982188

WIL BAILEY (#S-00140) San Isidro, Costa Rica

An SEJ/Conference Missionary, Wil is responsible for working with local pastors in the southern zone of Costa Rica and organizes the projects at the Methodist churches in that area for U.S. work teams. He also teaches Theology, Bible and English at the extension campus of the Methodist seminary in San Isidro. Contact information—Email: Jwilb4@yahoo.com Web: www.costaricamissionprojects.com

BRIAN DUBBERLY (#S-00197) El Salvador

Brian is working to establish a mission partnership between the Evangelical Methodist Church in El Salvador and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission in the US whose purpose is to improve the spiritual and physical lives of economically disadvantaged people living in El Salvador. Contact information—Email: brianSMP@yahoo.com Web: salvadoranmissionpartnership.com

SHANA HARRISON (#13089Z) Chile

Shana is serving as the Executive Director of Crescendo, a non-profit organization that promotes autonomy and self development of adults who have intellectual disabilities through protected spaces such as a workshop and group home. Crescendo strives to assist the adults in developing the tools necessary to live truly integrated in society and accompanies the families of adults who have intellectual disabilities in understanding and experiencing the adult life of their family members. Contact information—Email: sdhchile2003@yahoo.com Web: www.crescendo.cl

Related Lane 4: World Missions

John Wesley School for Persons with Disabling Conditions #12035A
La Esperanza: Sheltered Workshop and Group Home #14056A

BUTCH HUFFMAN (#S-00192) NC Conference

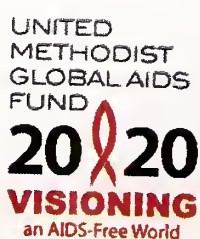
An NC Conference Missionary, Butch engages, encourages and recruits congregations for mission work-team participation. He works with churches to equip them with the “how-to’s” of doing local and foreign mission work teams. Contact information—Phone: 919-931-4304 Email: butchhuffman@bydasea.net

Related Lane 2: Conference Missions

UMVIM Work Teams #-S00021

GREG JENKS (#S-00148) ZOE Ministry, Sub-Sahara, Africa

An NC Conference Missionary, Greg is serving in North Carolina working with the people of Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and other areas of sub-Sahara Africa for the purpose of developing a comprehensive ministry in response to the AIDS pandemic with a primary focus in the care of HIV



“People are dying minute and literally fathers, sisters, brothers. The UM Council of Perfect 20/20 vision. The United Methodist free world by providing AIDS crisis. Through Methodists and mother to child,

UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

General Board newsletter and

Other Resources for Churches

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 156, No. 11

December 2011



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



orphans. The foci include establishing children's empowerment ministries, feeding programs, providing school fees and uniforms, and meeting spiritual needs of the children. Contact—Phone: 800-951-0234 Email: greg@zoeministry.org Web: <http://www.zoeministry.org/>

Related Lane 4: World Missions

ZOE Ministry #982023

SHIRLEY TOWNSEND JONES (#982995)
Bennettsville-Cheraw, SC

A Church and Community Worker, Shirley coordinates and implements spiritual, educational, social and economic programs for the 13 churches of the Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry. Contact—Phone: 843-479-4895 Email: stjones@localnet.com

Related Lane 3: National Missions

Bennettsville-Cheraw Cooperative Ministries—
SC Conference Advance

FRIDO KINKOLENGE (#15152Z) Liberia

A Methodist originally from the Congo, Frido has been working with the people of Liberia since 2004. He has started several extraordinary programs that are powerful and constructive like the Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center and Feed My Lambs. These programs support ex-combatants and street children and feeding/literacy training. Contact—Email: c_0102538@yahoo.com Web: <http://liberia.nccumc.net/>

Related Lane 4: World Missions

Brighter Future Children's
Rescue Center #3020790

Feed My Lambs #S-00179

FAITH LAMPHIER (#S-00187) India & Africa

An SEJ/Conference Missionary, Faith serves with A Work of Heart. This program shares God's love through hands-on classes in sewing, cooking, and handcrafts. The skills learned provide an opportunity for the girls and women to gain self-confidence and often increase the family income. Contact—Email: faith_onthego@yahoo.com

GARY WAYNE LOCKLEAR (#982955)
Rockingham District, NC

A Church and Community Worker, Gary is

assigned to the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry with the NC Conference. His main goal is to grow the Native American churches and leadership in the coming years and to explore the possibility of developing congregations in all Native American communities in the Conference. Contact information—Phone: 910-522-0670 Email: Glocklear1@intrstar.net Web: www.nativeamericanministries.org

Related Lane 3: National Missions

Rockingham District Native-American
Cooperative Ministries #791001

Native American Comprehensive Plan #982615

SEJ Association of Native American
Ministries #791842

MELBA MCCALLUM (#S-00195)
Rockingham District, NC

Salary support for Dr. McCallum, who serves as the Director of the Rockingham District Partners in Ministry. She partners with youth, young adults, families, and the church to help build and mobilize capacity within the district through "hands-on" ministry. Contact information—Phone: 910-206-2686 Web: RDPIIM.org Email: mdgmccallum@yahoo.com

Related Lane 2: Conference Missions

Rockingham District Partners
In Ministry (#S-00193)

NARA MELKONYAN (#S-00004) Armenia

Nara is the Director of Project AGAPE. She coordinates ministry and relief efforts at Project AGAPE in Armenia. Contact information—Email: nmelkonyan@yahoo.com Web: <http://nccumc.org/missions/projects/overseas/project-agape/>

Related Lane 4: World Missions

Project AGAPE, Armenia #S-00004

ROSANNA PANIZO-VALLADARES
(#3019710) Durham, NC

Rosanna reaches out to Hispanic/Latino families, providing access to public services, advocacy, immigration, translation, pastoral care, food ministry, educational workshops for parents and after-school programs. Contact—Phone: 919-317-8700 Email: rpanizo@nccumc.org

PERSONS IN MISSION

... Speak
... the Life

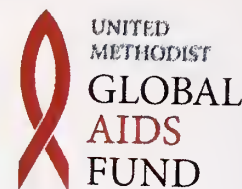
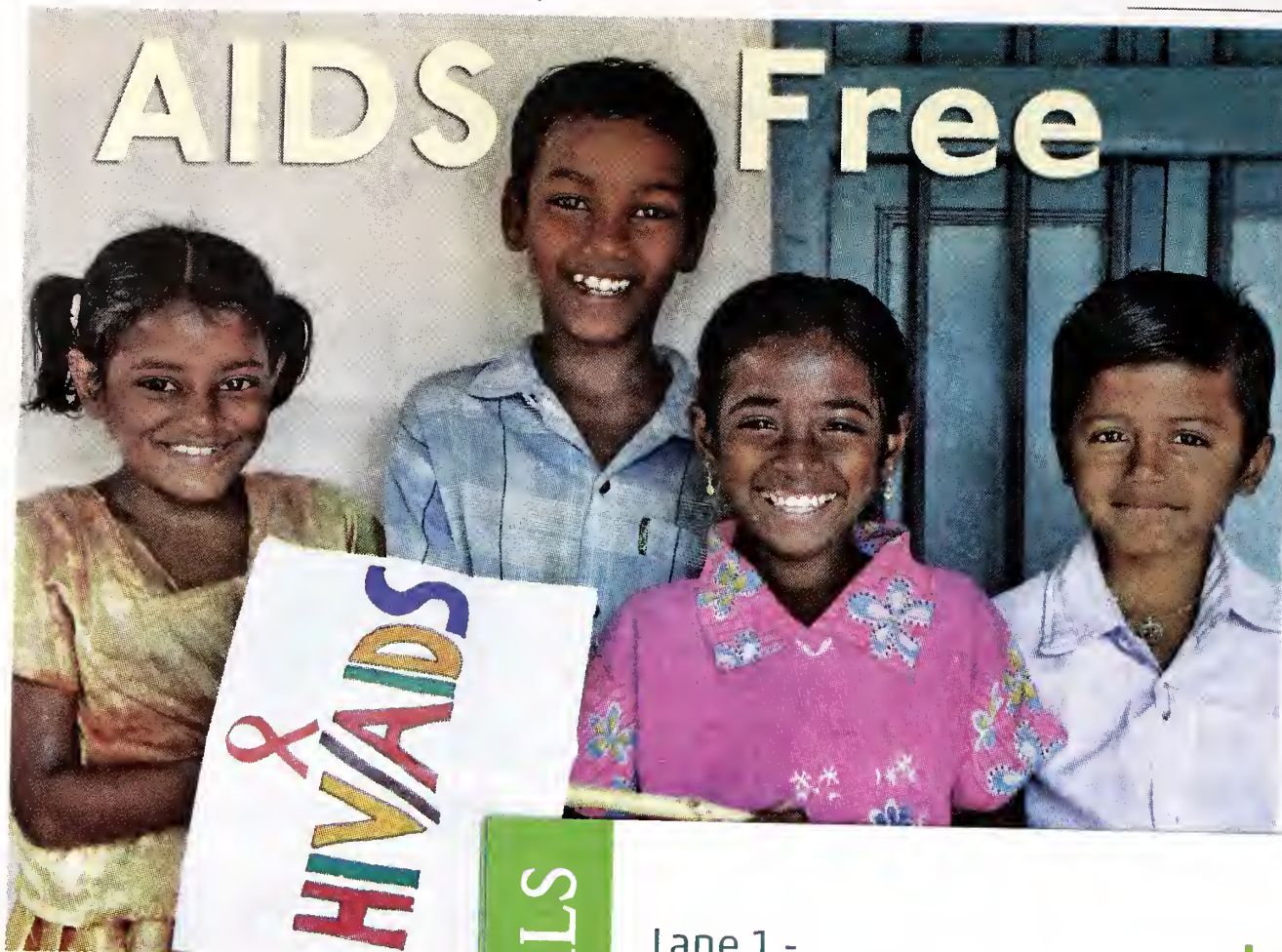
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"O God, whose Son went everywhere healing and caring for the sick and the marginalized: help us to overcome our own fears and biases. Enable us to reach out in loving compassion to all those in need. Let us not be like the unjust judge, but more like the widow who refused to take 'no' for an answer. In

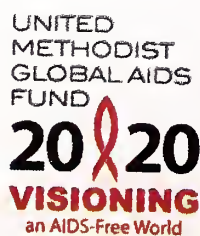
New '40 Days to commemorate

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"People are dying in minute and literal numbers. Fathers, sisters, brothers, mothers, children, young people, the elderly. The UM Council of General Boards is committed to a perfect 20/20 vision of a world free of AIDS by 2020. Through the efforts of Methodists and others, we can bring hope to every mother to child,

UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

General Board newsletter and

NC CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIALS

Lane 1 - Persons in Mission continued

ROSANNA PANIZO-VALLADARES continued

Related Lane 2: Conference Missions

Durham District Board of Mission #S-00202

Related Lane 3: National Missions

National Hispanic Ministries Challenge Fund #982620

VICKIE SIGMON (#982916) Winston-Salem, NC

A Church and Community Worker, Vickie works in a high-risk community developing Christian community, promoting social justice and proclaiming God's loving presence. Contact information—Phone: 336-724-0850 Email: openarmsumc@juno.com

Related Lane 3: National Missions

Open Arms Ministry #982916

VICTOR TARYOR (#3019571) Liberia

Victor is a hospital administrator for Ganta Hospital. Also a registered nurse, Victor oversees the daily operation of the hospital which provides the best possible care to each patient. Contact information—Email: vdoolakehtaryor@yahoo.com

Related Lane 4: World Missions

Ganta United Methodist Hospital #15080N

MARY ZIGBUO (#10721Z) NC - USA

Mary is a GBGM Missionary working with Circles of Hope in Wadesboro, NC (Anson County). Since 2009, Anson County has participated in a national poverty alleviation campaign aimed at equipping persons who desire to improve their quality of life and that of their families with skills, information, and community-based support to get out and stay out of poverty.

Any other advance specials listed in "Strength in Numbers" www.advancinghope.org.

Lane 2

NC Conference Advance Specials

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN UMC & Place of Possibilities (#S-08004)

This ministry develops programs to meet the needs of impoverished children and youth in rural Bertie, Hertford and Northampton counties. Contact—Web: www.allgodschildrenumc.org Phone: 252-345-1077

ALLIANCE MEDICAL MINISTRY (#S-00142)

This ministry was founded to provide affordable primary medical care to low-income, uninsured, working families in Wake County. They serve the working poor, families generally earning less than \$25,000 annually, who have no health insurance. Contact—Phone: 919-250-9154 Web: www.alliancemedicalministry.org

ANATHOTH GARDEN (#S-00248)

Anathoth Community Garden is a ministry of Cedar Grove UMC. At the garden, more than 50 families share together in garden work, workshops, worship services, and children's activities. Members pledge to work two hours each week and in return, they take home a share of the week's harvest. Anathoth's staff also trains other church and community groups throughout the US in their efforts to use God's earth faithfully. Web: www.anathothgarden.org

CASWELL COUNTY PARISH, INC. (#S-00008)

Sponsored by local member churches, ministry provides services to impoverished and low-income residents of Caswell County through Two Hearts Thrift Store and clothing ministry, emergency food pantry and utility assistance program. Mission is to be a cooperative ministry working to end poverty in Caswell County. Contact—Deborah Jones. Phone: 336-694-6428 Email: program@caswellparish.org

Other Resources for Churches

Continued on page 16

NC Conference Advance Specials

All God's Children UMC (#S-08004)	†	†	†		
Alliance Medical Ministry (#S-00142)		†	†		†
Anathoth Garden (#S-00248)		†	†	†	
Asbury Homes (#S-03501)					†
Caswell County Parish, Inc. (#S-00008)		†	†	†	
Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry (#S-00008)	†				†
Ethnic Local Church Projects - Rockingham District (#S-00022)	†	†	†		
Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC (#S-00025)		†		†	
Golden Cross (#S-00153)		†			
Hispanic Ministries (#S-00107)	†		†		
Hyde County Cooperative Parish (#S-00104)		†		†	†
ISA Grant Scholarship (#S-00033)		†			
Jerusalem Arc (#S-00196)	†	†			
Methodist Home for Children - Benevolent Fund (#S-03500)	†				†
Methodist Retirement Homes - Benevolent Fund (#S-03600)					†
Mission to Haiti (#S-00122)	†	†		†	
NC Council of Churches (#S-00051)	†	†	†	†	†
NC Interfaith Disaster Response (#S-00108)		†			†
NC Storms Emergency Response (#S-00176)		†			
No Hungry Neighbors (#S-00123)		†			
Passion in Partnership (#S-00249)					†
Peace & Justice Clinic (#S-00198)			†		
The Peace (#S-00183) Parenting & Marriage Enrichment	†				
Prison MATCH - Mothers & Their Children (#S-00054)	†		†		†
Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministries (#S-00143) and GBGM ADVANCE (#791001)	†	†	†		†
Rockingham District Partners in Ministry (#S-00193)	†	†	†		†
Ryan Epps Home for Children (#S-00245)	†	†		†	†
Society of St. Andrew (NC Office) - (#S-00081) and GBGM ADVANCE (#801600)	†	†		†	†
Stop Hunger Now (#S-00101)	†	†		†	†
UM Men Ministry Center (#S-00136)	†	†	†	†	†
UM Volunteers in Mission Work Teams (#S-00021)	†	†			†
Wesley Heritage Project (#S-00097)			†		†
Yokefellow Prison Ministries (#S-00078)					†
Youth Service Fund (YSF) (#S-00082)	†		†		†

NO CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIALS

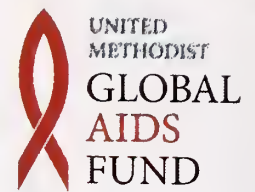
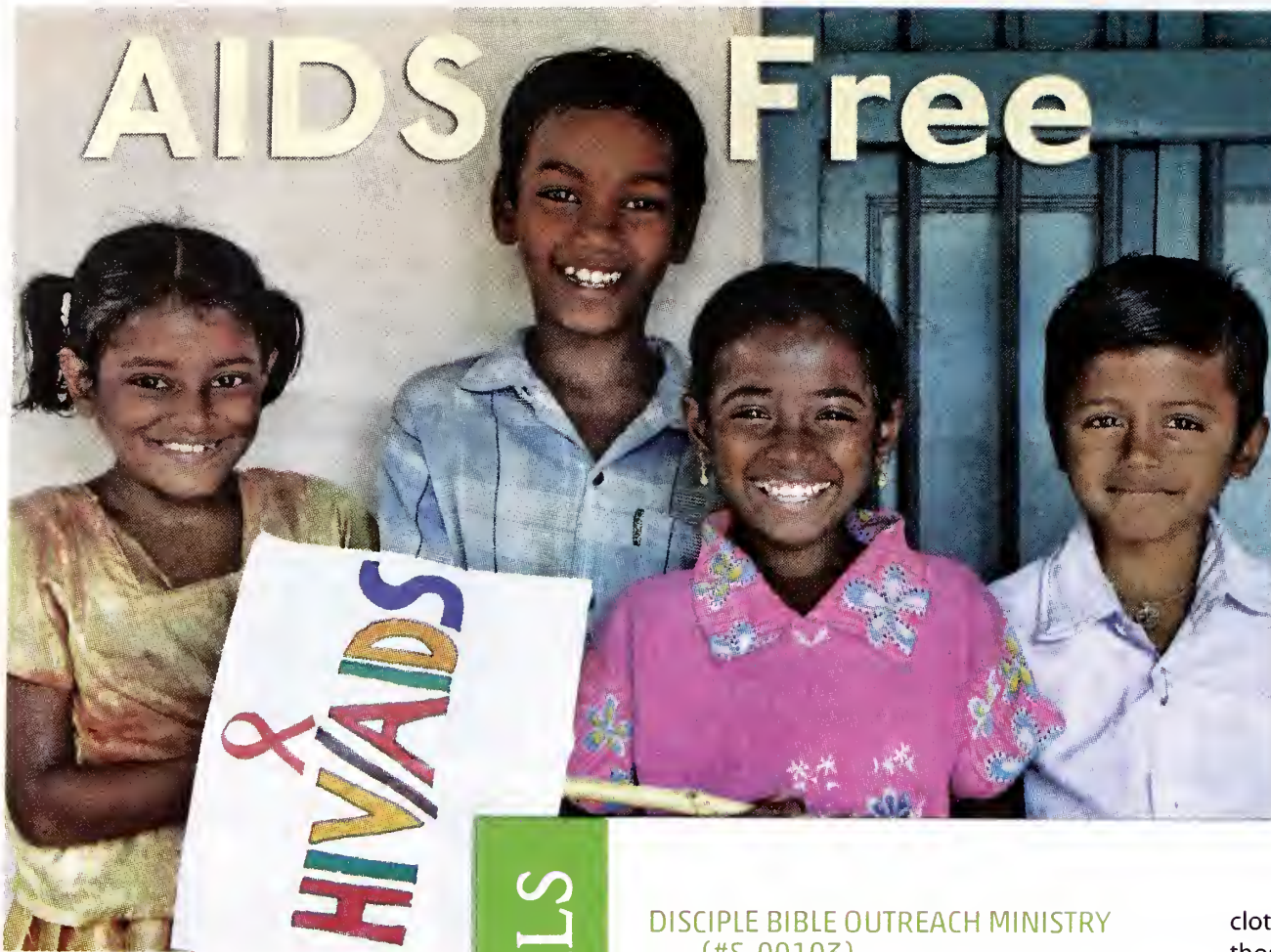
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New ‘40 Days to commemorate

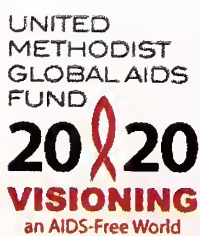
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Other
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for Churches

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The United Metho...
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AIDS crisis. Throu...
Methodists and t...
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UMCOR - HIV/A...
General Board...
newsletter and

NC CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIALS

DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH MINISTRY (#S-00103)

A collaborative ministry of the NC and Western NC Conferences. Promotes DISCIPLE Bible Studies in churches and manages the outreach of DISCIPLE in Prisons and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP in Youth Development Centers. Mission is: “to develop and strengthen Bible Study ministries in local churches and in outreach settings—especially prisons—which will transform lives, make disciples, and empower Christians for outreach ministry.” Contact—Dr. Mark Hicks. Phone: (336)454-5348 Email: MCHicks@northstate.net Web: www.disciplebibleoutreach.org

ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH PROJECTS IN ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT (#S-00022)

Funds assist ethnic churches with crucial needs. Phone: (910) 276-6641

FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN NC (#S-00025)

Provides food to 545,000 individuals in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina through more than 800 partner agencies including community-based, emergency feeding programs including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, elderly nutrition programs and after school programs for children. Phone: 919-875-0707 Web: www.foodbankcenc.org

GOLDEN CROSS (#S-00153)

Ministry that reaches out in love to the laity in the NC Conference who are experiencing financial difficulty due to excessive medical expenses. Phone: 1-800-849-4433 Web: www.nccumc.org/missions/golden-cross

HISPANIC MINISTRIES (#S-00107)

Ministry to the fast-growing Hispanic population in North Carolina. These funds are administered by the NC Conference Hispanic Ministry Team to support an increasing number of congregations who are developing ministry to Hispanics.

HYDE COUNTY COOPERATIVE PARISH (#S-00104)

Provides meals to the needy, recreation and other opportunities for youth, food pantry and

clothes closet, transportation for elderly and those needing medical care, ministry to inmates at the Hyde Correctional Facility, drug prevention awareness, assistance to abused persons and Hispanic ministry. Phone: (252) 926-0104

ISA GRANT SCHOLARSHIP (#S-00033)

The ISA Grant Scholarship Fund is designed to assist persons for whom the expense of participating in a mission team is prohibitive. Priority is given to youth 21 years of age and younger and will not exceed \$250. As ISA Grant Funds are limited, scholarship recipients are encouraged to assist in the replenishment of the fund. Contact—Bill Gross Email: bgross@windstream.net

JERUSALEM ARC (#S-00196)

Leadership development and Christian Education for Palestinian Christian youth and young adults in Palestine and Jerusalem. Contact—The Rev. Harold Salmon Email: revfish@nccumc.org

MISSION TO HAITI (#S-00122)

Many communities in Haiti do not have schools. This project is to assist in building schools and supplement teachers’ salaries when possible.

NC COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (#S-00051)

Gives witness to the unity that God has given through Christ to the churches in NC. It is an instrument for cooperative study and action, especially on matters of justice; child and family advocacy; violence against women; public policy advocacy; rural crisis and farm workers advocacy; disaster relief; criminal justice; workplace safety; peace-making; AIDS ministry; and Christian unity. Web: www.nccouncilofchurches.org/

NC STORMS EMERGENCY RESPONSE (#S-00176)

Disaster response financing for storm-related emergencies. These funds are used to address disaster response needs and for direct support to affected families and costs in delivering assistance. Contact—Steve Taylor Phone: 800-849-4433, ext. 257 Email: staylor@nccumc.org

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 156, No. 11

December 2011



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



NC INTERFAITH DISASTER RESPONSE (#S-00108)

The North Carolina Interfaith Disaster Response (NCIDR) assists their efforts before, during and after a disaster occurs. Emphasis is on long term relief, and supporting the administration of all interfaith organizations working with disaster relief and recovery. Phone: 919-510-9193 Web: www.ncidr.org/index.html

NO HUNGRY NEIGHBORS (#S-00123)

A ministry of increasing awareness, and eliminating hunger in North Carolina by raising funds for our regional food banks and the Society of St. Andrew, and engaging in hands-on ways to alleviate hunger in our community. Phone: 1-800-849-4433 ext 257. Web: <http://nccumc.org/outreach>

PASSION IN PARTNERSHIP (#S-00249)

Passion in Partnership, a movement, was formed to infuse life-giving practices into the Body of Christ as represented by relationships between laity, clergy and the community in which they live. Its focus is to build co-creative partnerships based on biblical principles, living in ways defined by Christ. The Passion in Partnership Coaching Certification Program has been developed to prepare Pastoral and Congregational Coaches to serve God in a manner which leads both coach and client into a process of discovery and co-creation. Email: coach@passioninpartnership.net Web: <http://passioninpartnership.net/>

PEACE AND JUSTICE CLINIC (#S-00198)

The Peace and Justice Clinic, Justice For Our Neighbors immigration legal clinic, is a joint ministry of the NC & the WNC Conferences. The monthly clinics provide free legal counsel to immigrants in a home-like hospitable atmosphere of caring and welcome. Web: <http://peaceandjusticeclinic.org/> Email: peaceandjusticeclinic@gmail.com

THE PEACE (#S-00183)

This ministry develops programs focusing on marriage, family, children and parenting/teaching issues within churches and schools in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat

settings. For Christians, marriage, family, and parenting can be approached as important spiritual disciplines contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of couples, families, children, youth and parents/teachers. Contact—Mike Hale. Phone: 910-425-3790 Email: mhale@nccumc.org Web: <http://thepeaceinc.org>

PRISON MATCH—Mothers And Their Children (#S-00054)

An interfaith program provides mothers and their children with the support and resources necessary to maintain and strengthen family relationships and to help break the cycle of children following their parents to prison. Phone: 919-828-4767 Email: director@prisonmatch.org Web: www.prisonmatch.org

ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES - "EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY" (#S-00143)

Provides ministry support, collaboration among 13 Native American UM churches, leadership development, gifts exploration and missional opportunities. Contact—Gary Locklear. Phone: 910-522-0670 Email: glocklear1@intrstar.net Web: www.nativeamericanministries.org/cooperative_ministry/

ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT PARTNERS IN MINISTRY (#S-00193)

Partners with local church congregations and communities to help alleviate poverty in the Rockingham District through hands-on outreach ministry with the poor and marginalized. Contact—Dr. Melba McCallum. Email: mdgmc-callum@yahoo.com Phone: 910-206-2686 Web: www.rdpim.org

RYAN EPPS HOME FOR CHILDREN (#S-00245)

Located in Haiti, the home provides food, clothing, and shelter for needy children and offers educational and spiritual growth opportunities. A school will serve 180 children from the surrounding community and the church will have a capacity of 170 people. Contact—Phone: 919-553-4572 Email: questions@ryanepphome.com Web: www.ryanepphome.com

NC CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIALS

You Speak the Life

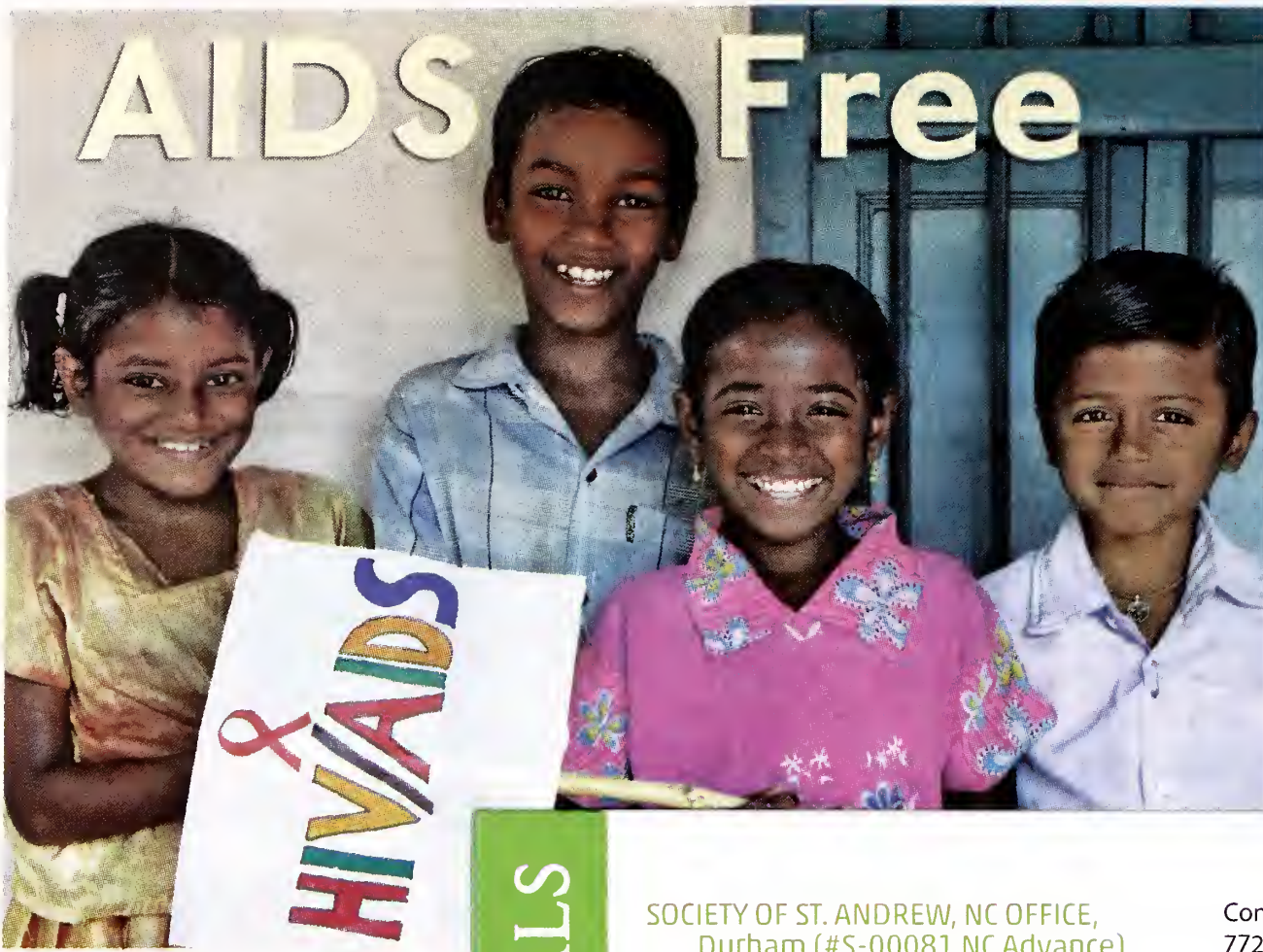
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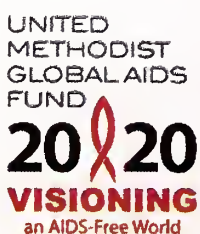
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Other
Resources
for Churches

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UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

General Board... newsletter and

NC CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIALS

SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW, NC OFFICE,
Durham (#S-00081 NC Advance)
(#801600 National Advance)

This is an ecumenical ministry dedicated to providing hunger-relief across NC through gleaning (salvaging surplus produce from farms and packing houses). Also raises awareness of the problem of hunger and how people can be part of the solution. Through the Seed Potato Project, Potato & Product and the NC office, 8-10 million of pounds of produce is saved and distributed in NC each year. Phone: 1-866-453-2662 Email: ncglean@endhunger.org Web: www.endhunger.org/north_carolina.htm

STOP HUNGER NOW (#S-00101)

SHN is an international hunger relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world. The organization is driven by a vision to end world hunger and a mission to provide food and life-saving aid to the world's most destitute and hungry in the most sustainable, efficient and effective manner. Contact—Phone: 1-888-501-8440 Email: info@stophungernow.org Web: www.stophungernow.org

UNITED METHODIST MEN MINISTRY CENTER (#S-00136)

The UMM Ministry Center is a volunteer-driven ministry whose focus is providing mission and ministry resources and opportunities to the NC Conference and beyond. Through their affiliation with UMCOR and other relief agencies, the Ministry Center serves as a natural disaster relief hub to provide aid to the survivors of social, economic and spiritual disaster.

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION WORK TEAMS (#S-00021)

Provides assistance for Volunteers in Mission work teams from within the NC Conference. Contact—Bill Gross Phone: 919-498-1660 Email: bgross@windstream.net Web: http://www.nccumvim.org

WESLEY HERITAGE PROJECT (#S-00097)

Gifts help distribute Obras de Wesley, the works of John and Charles Wesley in Spanish.

Contact—Mark W. Wethington Phone: (910) 295-7720 Email: wethmw@mindspring.com

YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRIES (#S-00078)

Educates people concerning Christian responsibility for persons affected by crime and brings Christians into direct service ministries with prison inmates and their families. Phone: (336) 724-9801 Web: www.yokefellowprisonministry.org

YOUTH SERVICE FUND (#S-00082)

Supports mission projects within the annual conference and beyond which have been selected by youth of the NC Conference. Contact—Robin Harry Email: rharry@nccumc.org Web: http://nccumc.org/youth/

UNITED METHODIST INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

United Methodist Camps:

Chestnut Ridge	#S-00062
Don Lee	#S-00063
Kerr Lake	#S-00064
Rockfish	#S-00065

Wesley Foundation for The UMC Campus Ministry Association

Duke University	#S-00073
ECU, Greenville	#S-00074
NC State University	#S-00075
UNC – Pembroke	#S-00076
UNC – Chapel Hill	#S-00077

General Scholarship Funds

Duke Divinity School.	#S-00026
Louisburg College	#S-00027
Methodist University.	#S-00028
NC Wesleyan College	#S-00029

Benevolent Funds

Methodist Home for Children	#S-03500
Methodist Retirement Homes. . . .	#S-03600

General Support

Asbury Homes.	#S-03501
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Any other advance specials listed in “Strength in Numbers” www.advancinghope.org.

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 156, No. 11

December 2011



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



Lane 3

National Missions

ROBESON COUNTY CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER, Lumberton, NC (#791742)

An ecumenical ministry in a multicultural community, second most impoverished county of its size in the nation, which is designed to help local churches meet emergency needs, literacy tutoring for children and adults, home repairs and building new homes. Speakers are available upon request. Contact—Phone: 910-738-5204 Web: Robeson County Church and Community Center – Search Facebook.

NATIONAL HISPANIC MINISTRIES CHALLENGE FUND (#982620)

Provides assistance to Annual Conferences developing Hispanic Ministries, especially in the areas of leadership recruitment and development, financial resources and printed resources. Contact—Rev. Rosanna Panizo-Valladares. Phone: 919-317-8700 Email: rpanizo@nccumc.org

THE NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY (#982001)

A faith-based ministry dedicated to migrant farm workers: the men, women, and children who labor in the fields to harvest our fruits and vegetables. NFWM educates and raises awareness in congregations and church groups about the decade-long struggle of migrant farm workers and their families. The ministry encourages congregations to put their faith into action to support farm workers as they organize for justice, empowerment and equality. Contact—Phone: 919-489-4485 Email: nc@nfwf.org Web: www.nfwf.org/northcarolina

HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER, Hayesville, NC (#731372)

A retreat center offering rest and renewal. The center staff provides training and development for churches in town and rural settings. Contact—Lyle Shipley. Phone: 828-389-8336 Email: info@hintoncenter.org Web: www.hintoncenter.org

NATIVE AMERICAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (#982615)

Supports leadership development, new church starts, and discipleship formation in the Native American community. Contact—Rev. Anita Phillips. Phone: 918-686-8444 Email: nacomp@prodigy.net Web: www.gbod.org/nativeamerican/

SEJ AGENCY OF NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES, Lake Junaluska, NC (#791842)

Helps meet the needs of 130,000+ Native Americans living in the 17 annual conferences of the Southeast. Contact—Rev. Jeff Ramsland. Phone: 828-454-6724 Web: www.sejumc.org/sejanam/

RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, Beverly, Kentucky (#773978)

The conference program facilitates the development of local churches and local lay leaders in isolated rural mountain communities. Phone: 606-598-5915 Email: info@redbirdconference.org Web: www.redbirdconference.org/

Any other advance specials listed in "Strength in Numbers" www.advancinghope.org.

NATIONAL MISSIONS

Speak the Life

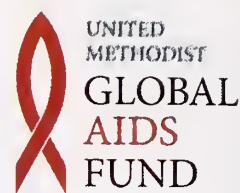
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New ‘40 Days to Commemorate’

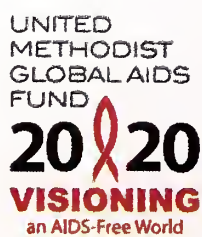
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Other Resources for Churches

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UMCOR - HIV/A...
General Board... newsletter and

WORLD MISSIONS

Lane 4 World Missions

BREAD FOR THE WORLD (#982325)

Collective Christian voice urging US decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. They provide policy analysis and strategies to end hunger as well as education for its advocacy network, opinion leaders, policy makers and the public about hunger in the United States and abroad. Contact—Phone: 202-639-9400 Email: bread@bread.org Web: www.bread.org

Crisis In Darfur & Sudan

ANIMAL LIVESTOCK & BEEKEEPING, Sudan (#3020638)

Training farmers in animal husbandry and beekeeping to improve the communities’ economy.

EMERGENCY, Sudan (#184385)

Assisting the country through emergency and long-term development projects.

SHALOM MINISTRY, Sudan (#3020787)

Supporting children orphaned by the war and HIV/AIDS.

CRISIS IN HAITI (#418325)

Supports emergency relief and developmental efforts after the devastating earthquake in January 2010.

CROP/CHURCH WORLD SERVICE COMMUNITY HUNGER APPEAL (#982380)

Works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world. Local church CROP events can receive UMCOR credit. Contact—Phone: 574-264-3102 For Forms: 800-297-1516 Email: info@churchworldservice.org Web: www.churchworldservice.org

CURAMERICAS GLOBAL, Bolivia (#10158A)

Provides vaccinations, nutritional monitoring of children, prenatal care, and other preventative health care services. Contact—Jaime Carrillo, MD, MPH. Phone: 919-510-8787 or 877-510-4787 Email: info@curamericas.org Web: www.curamericas.org

HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL (#982532)

Envisions a world of communities sharing the resources of a healthy planet wherein they provide families a source of food. Their program allows millions of people to share their animals’ offspring, knowledge, resources and skills with others in order to expand and create a network of hope, dignity and self reliance that reaches 128 countries. Contact—Phone: 800-422-0474 Email: info@heifer.org Web: www.heifer.org

Love For Liberia Fund, Liberia

A two-year focus beginning in 2011 of missional action, prayer, and giving for United Methodist ministries in Liberia.

General Love for Liberia Fund	#S-00221
Work Team Support	#S-00222
Provision of School Books.....	#S-00223
Bibles for Children and Students	#S-00224
Laptop/Computer Ministry	#S-00225
Scholarships for College	#S-00226
Scholarships for Seminary	#S-00227
Scholarships for Primary Education	#S-00228
Purchase Tractors for Mission Stations	#S-00229
Provision of Medications	#S-00230
Funds for shipping	#S-00231
Support Agricultural Self Sustainability....	#S-00232
Purchase Tools	#S-00233
Provision of Building Materials.....	#S-00234
Food Provision Ministry for Children.....	#S-00235
Purchase Skills Development Supplies.....	#S-00236
Provision of Fuel for Generators	#S-00237
Vehicles for Pastors/DSs/Mission Workers	#S-00238

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 156, No. 11

December 2011



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

N87c

Pilgrimage 2011



Love For Liberia Fund Continued

Ganta United Methodist
Mission Station #14369T
Rebuilding mission station buildings and
infrastructure destroyed in the war.

Brighter Future Children's
Rescue Center #3020790
Supports ex-combatants and provides
vocational/literacy training and feeding.

Feed My Lambs #S-00179
Supports street children, and feeding/literacy
training.

Sustainable Agriculture
and Development #S-00180
Creating technologically appropriate
practices and Farmer Field Schools.

PERU COVENANT TEAM, Peru

Funds received for this project will help the
NC Conference fulfill a covenant made with
the Methodist Church in Peru. Funds may be
designated for the following:

General Fund	#S-00053
Children and Youth	#S-00117
Breakfast of Love	#S-00111
Women's Programs	#S-00119
Matched Churches	#S-00112
Building and Work Teams	#S-00113
Leadership Development	#S-00120
Medical Needs	#S-00114
Mission Teams	#S-00121
National Plan for Evangelism	#S-00115
White Plains/North Lima	#S-00173
Christian Education-all ages	#S-00116
Theological Education & Pastoral Formation-Obras de Wesley	#S-00118

PROJECT AGAPE, Armenia (#S-00004)

Relief efforts in Armenia (food, medical supplies,
medication); working with the Armenian Church
to provide a holistic ministry in pastoral care,
education, health care, agriculture and economic
development. NC Conference United Methodist
Church Contact—Steve Taylor. Phone: 919-779-
6115, ext. 257 Email: staylor@nccumc.org

ZOE MINISTRY, Sub-Sahara, Africa (#982023)

This ministry works with the people of Zimbabwe,
Zambia, Kenya and Rwanda to develop a
comprehensive ministry in response to the AIDS
pandemic; with a primary focus in the care of HIV
orphans. The foci include establishing children's
empowerment ministries, feeding programs,
providing school fees and uniforms, and meeting
spiritual needs of the children. Contact—Greg
Jenks, NC Conference Missionary. Phone: 800-
951-0234 Email: greg@zoeministry.org Web:
<http://www.zoeministry.org/>

Any other advance specials listed in "Strength in
Numbers" www.advancinghope.org

WORLD MISSIONS

...y speak
the life

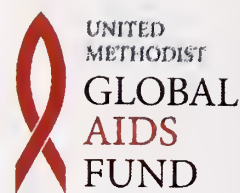
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New '40 Day to commem

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VISIONING
an AIDS-Free World

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UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

General Board
newsletter and

Lane 5

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

Web: www.umcor.org Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org
Phone: 212-870-3552 Volunteer Hotline: 800-918-3100

UMCOR is the global humanitarian aid organization of The United Methodist Church. It works in 80+ countries worldwide, including the US.

Their mission is to alleviate human suffering—caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people. They respond to communities that are unable to recover on their own.

How to Give

You may write a check to UMCOR and mail to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087; or, for local church and Annual Conference credit, give to your church for mailing. Please write the Advance number and name in the memo line.

You may pay by credit card:
Call (800) 554-8583

You may give online at: <http://secure.gbgbm-umc.org/donations/advance/index.cfm>

Featured Advance Specials

GLOBAL REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION
RESPONSE (#982540)

UMCOR responds to initial emergency needs of uprooted people and provides programs through community and/or church based projects that prepare refugees for a productive, self-sustaining life when they can safely return to their own country or resettle in a new home. Contact—Rosanna Panizo-Valladares Email: rpanizo@nccumc.org

INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCIES

When international emergencies arise, UMCOR will assign an advance number for each emergency. Contact—UMCOR Phone: 212-870-3909 Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org Web: www.umcor.org

UMCOR DISASTER RESPONSE (#901670)

UMCOR works in more than 80 countries worldwide, including the United States. Its mission, grounded in the teachings of Jesus, is to alleviate human suffering—whether caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people. UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters that are interruptions of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own. Contact—Volunteer Hotline: 800-918-3100 Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org Web: www.umcor.org

WORLD HUNGER/POVERTY (#982920)

The Global Hunger and Poverty Program is an integral part of UMCOR's mission to empower the most vulnerable. Global hunger and poverty occurs to more than 800 million people in a world with unparalleled wealth and food production due to lack of accessibility and equal distribution to all people regardless of their class, gender, geography, religion, earning power or status. More information—<http://new.qbgm-umc.org/advance>

Other Resources for Churches



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



Reporting 2011 Rainbow Covenant Giving

Complete all information on the reverse side of this page for your congregation and return to your District Missions Secretary.

Completing this form ensures that your church will be recognized for its work in missions in the past year.

Remember: In order to be recognized as a Rainbow Covenant church, churches must pay 100% of all 2011 apportionments and give a contribution in each of the five lanes. The six Special Sunday offerings are not included.

Return this form to the District Missions Secretary by January 31, 2012.

NOTE: Send contributions to the NCC Treasurer's Office. Check with that office for the due dates for Advance and Apportionment remittances.

District Mission Secretaries

Burlington – Rev. Jimmy Wooten
Cedar Cliff UMC, 4683 Cedar Cliff Rd, Graham NC 27253
(336) 376-6321 (o) Email: jwooten@nccumc.org

Durham – Kay Deans
2151 Kittrell Road, Kittrell, NC 27544
(252) 492-0168 (o) Email: kdeans@ncol.net

Elizabeth City – Ed Rutenkroger
409 Taylor Street, Windsor, NC 27983
(252) 794-9270 (h) Email: erutenkroger@nccumc.org

Fayetteville – Rev. Michael Hale
The PEACE, 4948 Lattimore St., Hope Mills, NC 28348
(910) 987-3753 (o) Email: mhale@nccumc.org

Goldsboro – Mike Whatley
1811 O'Berry Center Road, Goldsboro, NC 27530
(919) 735-9838 (o) Email: mwhatley@earthlink.net

Greenville – Rev. Susan Harrison
114 E. Church Street, Williamston, NC 27892
(252) 792-3360 (o) Email: sharrison@nccumc.org

New Bern – Rev. Connie Stutts
637 Farm Life Avenue, Vanceboro, NC 28586
(252) 671-7143 (c) Email: cstutts@nccumc.org

Raleigh – Rev. Jo Elaine Harris
10621 Silverwood Creek Dr., Raleigh, NC 27614
(919) 787-0544, Ext. 19 (o) Email: joelaine@nccumc.org

Rockingham – Roberta Foster
PO Box 395, Laurel Hill, NC 28351 (910) 268-4503 (h)

Rocky Mount – Rev. Paul Dunham
1719 Waterford Dr. NW, Wilson NC 27896
(252) 237-3709 (o) Email: pdunham@nccumc.org

Sanford – Rev. Patricia Sykes
512 Scotland Ave. Rockingham, NC 28379
(910) 974-4454 (o) Email: pssykes@nccumc.org

Wilmington – Rev. Edith Gleaves
6004 Inland Greens Dr., Wilmington, NC 28405
(910) 256-4771 (o) Email: elgleaves@nccumc.org

RAINBOW COVENANT REPORTING

47 Speak
the Life

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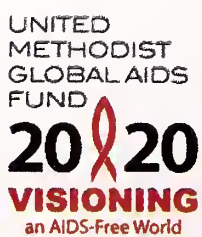
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Other Resources for Churches

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UMCOR - HIV/AI... General Board... newsletter and

RAINBOW COVENANT REPORT

2011 Rainbow Covenant Report

Church _____

District _____

Church Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Chairperson of Missions/Outreach _____

Name/Phone of Person Completing Form _____

1. Did your church complete the first mile of United Methodist Missions by paying 100% of its 2010 apportionments (World Service & Connectional Ministries, Episcopal Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation, Black Colleges, Africa University Fund and Past Service Liability)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did your church go the second mile by giving to the Advance for missions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, use the table on the right to list projects supported and the amounts given to each (use additional paper if necessary).

2011 Giving and Church Membership Totals

Grand total of all gifts given to the Advance _____
Your church membership at the end of 2011 _____
Per-member giving to the Advance for 2011 (divide grand total by membership) _____

Projects supported and amounts given:

Lane 1: Persons in Mission

Lane 2: NC Conference Advance Missions

Lane 3: National Missions

Lane 4: World Missions

Lane 5: UMCOR

Return this form to the District Missions Secretary by January 31, 2012. NOTE: Send contributions to the NCC Treasurer's Office. Check with them for the due dates for Advances and Apportionments.



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

NEtc

Pilgrimage 2011



Conference Media Resource Center

Open to all churches in the conference, The Walton Memorial Media Center is located in the United Methodist Building in Garner. The Media Center has over 2,500 video and printed resources available for preview and use by local churches. Resources include materials for teacher training, mission awareness, age level studies, expert-led Bible classes, stewardship

programs, and curriculum examples. Come to the Center and browse through the resources or look through the Online Catalog via the web site: <http://nccumc.org/mediacenter/>. Resource orders can be completed by phone at 919-779-6115 or 1-800-849-4433, ext. 264 or by e-mail to Director Laura Dallas at ldallas@nccumc.org.

Children & Youth

In Search of YSF:
Stories of the Youth Service Fund.. DVD161
This DVD explains how the Youth Service Fund works and shows stories of the it in action.

Let the Children Give.....BK531
This book is designed to supplement an ongoing ministry with children. It helps teach children how to use their gifts, talents, and the earth's resources as a way to show love for God.

Made to Make a Difference..... DVD341
In these four challenging sessions, Max Lucado offers Biblical insight into how God has uniquely created students with passions, talents, and interests to impact the world for Christ.

Simply Enough..... DVD185
Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne team-up to lead sessions on simple and just living. Choices about food, clothing, money, accountability and more, are covered in 7 sessions.

Thinking Theologically about MoneyBK406
A 6-session small group study for youth, this resource explores negative and positive effects on money, attitudes towards persons based on financial resources, the reality of check and credit card debt, what is tithing and more.

Church Revitalization

The Complete Ministry Audit.....KIT85
Bill Easum's book to help 1) understand your congregation's particular character, 2) diagnose problems and opportunities, 3) plot strategies, and 4) extend your mission into the community. Book with forms and assessments. CD with additional printouts and tools.

Greening Congregations Handbook.....BK530
A comprehensive handbook for individuals or church groups who want to consider issues of

sustainability and conservation in terms of the local church programming and community life. Includes references, form samples, and articles.

Healthy Congregations in Every Place....DVD156
Highlights and introduces the Healthy Congregations program of the Conference.

Wonders of Wellness..... DVD271
Study guide available for this program showing transforming taking place in 4 local churches in the NC Conference. Risk-taking Ministry, Intentional Spiritual Formation, Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship.

Missions

All Good Gifts..... DVD157
14 Stories of United Methodist Connectional Giving: World Service Fund, Africa University Fund, Ministerial Education Fund, Advance, Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries Sunday, Peace with Justice Sunday, World Communion Sunday, and United Methodist Student Day.

Africa University Fund..... DVD458
Through this DVD, you have the opportunity to visit the Africa University campus in Zimbabwe and hear graduates share how the United Methodist-supported university has prepared them to help transform the continent of Africa.

Be There: UMCOR One Great Hour of Sharing..... DVD138
Includes 3 segments: 3-minute inspirational message, 7 minutes highlighting UMCOR's work, and music video, "We Change the World."

The Black College Fund: Instruments of Change..... DVD454
The Black College Fund, which United Methodist congregations support through their apportionment gifts, has helped countless men and women earn a college degree.

MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER



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MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER

Missions continued

Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus DVD382
Linking Bible study to global mission and local service, this six-session small group resource from Mike Slaughter enables congregations to discuss and act on the imperatives of scripture.

Disciple Bible Outreach..... DVD89
This video tells the story of how DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries reaches out to inmates.

Here I Am Lord DVD319
This video features the powerful and vital impact of missionaries serving around the world. Your “second-mile giving” to the Advance enables these missionaries and others to fulfill their different ministries and spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Ministerial Education Fund..... DVD457
Since 1968, the Ministerial Education Fund has helped thousands of men and women to become pastoral leaders in the denomination.

Partnering with United Methodist Missionaries DVD459
This DVD promotes the importance of establishing a Covenant Relationship through The Advance with Global Ministries’ missionaries.

Sharing God’s Gifts: NCC 2004 DVD103
Apportionments translate into Mission and Ministries, an overview of the work being done in The United Methodist Church and featuring our North Carolina Conference.

Through the Corridors of Mission DVD421
Providing a biblical basis for mission in different periods and centuries, the DVD also offers specific stories of women engaged in mission against the odds.

Together We Can..... DVD327
This DVD features an introduction to the apportioned funds and stories of ministries made possible through your giving to the Africa University Fund, Black College Fund, Episcopal Fund, General Administration Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, Ministerial Education Fund and World Service Fund.

ZOE Ministry Videos..... DVD418
Videos about the ZOE Ministry, a United Methodist ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in Africa. A program of the General Board of Global Ministries Advance.

Stewardship

The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics BK784
This booklet by Ched Myers offers seven studies of the scriptural views of Jubilee justice and God’s Dream of enough for everyone.

Curing Affluenza Series..... DVD258
Tony Campolo leads a series on evaluating our attitudes towards our time, our money and our stuff. Each tape is 20-25 minutes long, with discussion questions following the viewing available in the study guide.

Enough, Discovering Joy Through Simplicity & Generosity DVD265
Adam Hamilton leads a small group study for rediscovering the Bible’s wisdom on “prudent financial practices.”

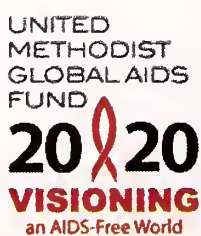
Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving..... KIT114
Created by Michael Reeves and Jennifer Tyler, Extravagant Generosity is built on Bishop Robert Schnase’s groundbreaking book, The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations.

Faithful and Wise: Being a Good Steward DVD30
All the gifts that God has given us are part of our stewardship responsibilities. The six eight-minute segments of the study with discussion guide, cover how to expand our giving to every facet of our lives, “including our time, our skills and talents, our physical and spiritual environments, and our money and possessions.”

Fundraising When Money Is Tight BK578
A strategic and practical guide to surviving tough times by Mal Warwick.

Good Sense/Freed-Up Biblical Financial Principles for Transforming Your Finances & Life KIT50
This program by Dick Towner and John Tofilon “will help the people in your church discover tools and develop skills that enable them to control their finances rather than allowing their finances to control them.”

Living for Giving: A Wesleyan View of Stewardship DVD290
Bishop Kenneth L. Carder explains the spiritual discipline and Wesley traditions concerning stewardship and personal giving. The segments contain instruction and real life scenarios to challenge members of local churches. Divided into 5 sessions: Stewardship as: Christian Dis-



Other
Resources
for Churches

“People are dying minute and literate fathers, sisters, brothers. The UM Council of Perfect 20/20 vision. The United Methodist free world by providing AIDS crisis. Through Methodists and mother to child,

UMCOR - HIV/AIDS
General Board newsletter and



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban
Pages 4-5

Pilgrimage 2011



ipleship, Sharing in God's Mission, Vocation,
Living Simply, and Call to Strategic Generosity.

New Beginnings: My Opportunity for Giving:
Stewardship as a Way of Life..... KIT49
Paul Wilkes leads this series designed to lead
the congregation through an experience of
learning, prayer, fellowship, and discernment.
All materials are included in the multimedia kit.

New Consecration Sunday:
Stewardship ProgramKIT97
New Consecration Sunday materials teach stew-
ardship from a spiritual rather than a fundraising
perspective. What is God calling me to do? Kit
includes leader's guide with CD-ROM and an
example of a team member manual.

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate BK588
Hearing a young attorney speak of the Faith-
based reasons for his substantial monetary gift
to a community youth center, Clif Christopher
asked the speaker if he would make a similar
contribution to his congregation. "Lord no,
they wouldn't know what to do with it." What is
the compelling reason for a new generation of
members to give to their local church?

Rich: Nooma Series..... DVD129
Rob Bell asks questions about wealth: "Maybe
what we have is enough...maybe God has
blessed us...so we can bless and give to others."

Questions of Faith V, Tape 2:
Whose Money Is It? VC1346
The panel discusses the following questions:
Why is it hard for us to talk about money? What
does your faith have to do with your money?
How can we be faithful in a consumer society?

**Transformed Giving: Realizing Your Church's
Full Stewardship Potential**.....KIT63
A 40 day, six week church-wide study by John Ed
Mathison, with DVD and materials to encourage
spiritual growth and commitment.

Upside Living in a Downside Economy...DVD270
A four-week video based study for small groups
concerned with financial health based on bibli-
cal principles and money management prac-
tices led by Mike Slaughter.

Wesley on Giving VC1202
This resource, developed for clergy study groups,
can be adapted for congregational studies. The
three sessions are: On Wealth, Rules for the Use
of Wealth, and Fundamentals of Giving. Includes
video sessions and Bishop Ken Carder's study
paper, "Giving from a Wesleyan Perspective."

Additional Resources

Resources by Phone & Email

UM Communications:
Techshop, Customer Service, EcuFilm
Video Sales, Special Sunday Materials
1.888.346.3862

Curric-U-Phone, UM Publishing House
1.800.251.8591

Rethink Church: 1.877.281.6535
Email: rethinkchurch@umcom.org

InfoServ - Official information resource
for all questions regarding The United
Methodist Church worldwide.
Email: infoserv@umcom.org

Lake Junaluska Assembly
1.704.452.2881 or 1.800.222.4930

General Board of Global Ministries
Mission Resource Center: 1.800.305.9857

Internet Resources

NC Conference
www.nccumc.org

NC Conference Treasurer
www.nccumc.org/treasurer

NCC Christian Advocate
www.nccumc.org/advocate/

NCC Media Center
www.nccumc.org/mediacenter/

United Methodist Foundation
www.umf-nc.org

The United Methodist Church
www.umc.org
www.umcsgiving.org

General Board of Global Ministries
www.gbglm-umc.org

Rethink Church
www.umcom.org/rethinkchurch

Center for Christian Stewardship
www.gbod.org/stewardship

MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER

Speak the Life

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UMCOR - HIV/AIDS

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CONFERENCE RESOURCE PERSONS

Conference Resource Persons

Would you like to have someone come interpret the conference budget and programs and services made possible through outreach giving? Call Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, or Caro Goehring, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries and Church Revitalization, at 1-800-849-4433 to arrange consultation.

THE UNITED METHODIST BUILDING
700 Waterfield Ridge Place, Garner NC 27529

Monday-Friday; 8:00AM-5:00PM
Phone: 919-779-6115 or 1-800-849-4433
FAX: 919-773-2308
www.nccumc.org

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**Council on Finance
& Administration Officers**
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Vice President
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Ms. Cynthia Walker
Secretary

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Cabinet Representative
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**Director of New
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**Commission
on Stewardship Chair**
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North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Vol. 156, No. 11

December 2011



Bishops
address
same-sex
union ban

Pages 4-5

NB7c



By Mary Francis McClure *

In a nutshell, Pilgrimage 2011 was: 5,215 people singing praise to God... hundreds of youth leading worship...over 19,000 meals packed for Stop Hunger Now...7,000 pounds of sweet potatoes picked...a thousand Facebook posts....and one Three-in-One God worshiped and glorified.

God blessed us through passionate worship, inspired testimony, and the Word proclaimed and lived out in prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

God worked preveniently through the worship song the Rev. Adam Seate and

Jay Locklear penned as the theme song for Pilgrimage 2011. The third verse tells us, "Jesus, You have set us free; Now we follow where You lead. Out of darkness we have come, And Your Spirit leads us home!"

God led us to the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville to be blessed, refreshed, and challenged to follow the way, speak the truth, and live the life at Pilgrimage 2011.

This year's speakers for Pilgrimage were "old school" meets "new school."

Lanecia and Ciona Rouse came to Pilgrimage many years ago when their parents were the speakers. And now, 15 years later, they came to share God's word and how God is working in each of their lives and ministries.

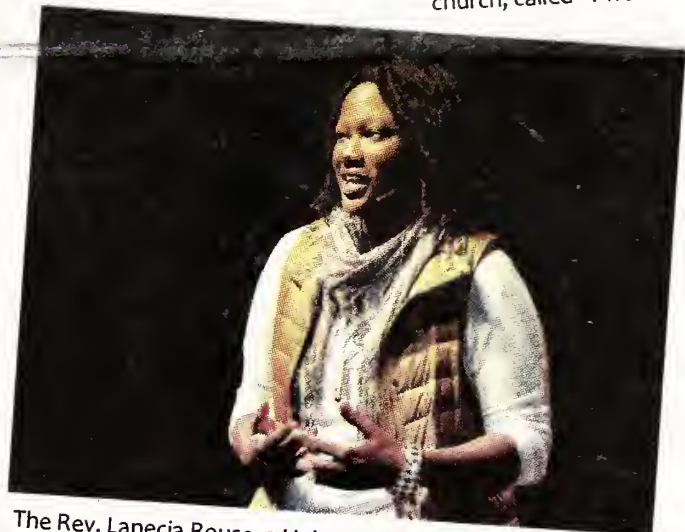
Lanecia came to us from Houston, TX where she is a pastor at St. John's UMC Downtown and serves as project manager for the Art Project of Houston and Volunteer Coordinator for The Bread of Life.

These ministries of St. John's Church work to bring healing to Houston's homeless and poor. She shared many powerful stories with moving photos telling us about how God is transforming lives through art, love, and acceptance.

One statement Lanecia made was tweeted multiple times because of its power, "God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it!"

See "Pilgrimage," page 2

Most youth attending Pilgrimage were in grades 6-12. Nine-year-old Hanna, lower right, had just as much fun as other youth from Ahoskie UMC and other churches across the conference. During Pilgrimage, the group participated on-stage sharing a song written by Patrick Rose, a youth from their church, called "I Trust."



The Rev. Lanecia Rouse, a United Methodist pastor from Houston, TX and manager for the Art Project of Houston and volunteer coordinator for The Bread of Life, challenged Pilgrimage youth to imagine ways their gifts can be used in the world. "How are you going to step out in faith and follow Jesus?" she asked.

One of the ways that youth can get involved in Pilgrimage is with the Pilgrimage House Band—the primary music group which serves as the music leaders for each of the four worship services. Other than the adult leadership, the House Band is made up entirely of youth from across the NC Conference. Shown singing at right are some of the band members including (L-R) Ashley Martin, Julia Lopp, Hunter Rae Houston, and Erin Stowe.

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PERIODICALS



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Pilgrimage 2011

continued from page 1

No matter what we do. No matter what we say. No matter how far we run, God runs after us and continually invites us into a beautiful relationship of grace and love. This is a message that all of us, youth and adults alike, need to hear in a world full of ugliness and hatred.

Ciona grew up in South Carolina as a PK (Preacher's Kid) and now lives in Nashville, TN where she writes for several organizations on humanitarian issues as well as publishing books of her own writing. She shared spoken word poetry pieces throughout the weekend. Few of us will forget to look for the beautiful things in life for we are all "bursting with beautiful" because we are God's creations.

While the adult speakers and worship leaders give structure and passion to the event, it is always the youth who speak and lead worship who provide the most powerful places of possibility for God to work in mysterious and beautiful ways.

A youth wrote this on Facebook about one of the testimonies shared by another youth, "One of my favorite parts of Pilgrimage was the last testimony shared. It really hit me when he spoke about the different masks/personas we put on in different social situations: At School, At Home, With our Friends, At Church."

Another youth posted, "On Saturday when the girl that battled bone marrow cancer was telling her testimony, I was led to my decision of going into the medical field and specializing in palliative care. Almost all of last week I had been thinking about a conversation my mom and I had last week about palliative care."

Pilgrimage is a place where God speaks loudly to youth and adults alike. Whether God speaks through the testimony of how God is working in lives like yours and mine or through the music with the Pilgrimage House Band or our special guest the Jake Brothers Band or through the speakers, God does speak loudly enough to be heard over screaming youth and blaring

speakers with woofers and tweeters on full blast. God was doing a mighty work at the Crown Coliseum over this three-day weekend!

While Pilgrimage is meant to be a mountain-top experience for youth, many adults speak of how God works through Pilgrimage to bless their souls as well.

One pastor wrote, "I found myself healing and becoming excited about ministry again. That was a good thing and nice to feel again."

Another youth worker wrote, "I have never been to Pilgrimage that it didn't impact my spiritual walk and closeness with Christ. There wasn't a session I wasn't moved to tears by some act of worship. The power of the Holy Spirit when 5,000 people are worshipping is beyond words!"

Adults do not "age out" of Pilgrimage. When the Holy Spirit is swirling around covering us with God's grace, all of us singing God's praises are touched and transformed.

Conference Youth President, Landis Barber, challenged us to not keep Pilgrimage as a one time, mountain-top event but to share our stories. As someone tweeted: "If the only thing heard was what Landis just said, we count it a win. 'Don't go back and do nothing. Go home and spread the word.'"

All youth in 6th-12th grade and youth leaders in the conference are encouraged to make time for Pilgrimage 2012. You will be glad that you decided to worship God with 5000 of your closest friends.

As a youth leader reminds us, "When do I take time to spend those kind of hours over a 3-day period with Christ? It's not about having time, but taking time...and that's exactly what Pilgrimage does!"

Put Nov. 9-11, 2012 on your calendar now, and prepare to be transformed through the awesome power of the Holy Spirit.

** Mary Francis McClure is pastor of Trinity UMC in Red Springs and is a member of Pilgrimage Planning Team.*



ABOVE: Bishop Al Gwinn, second from right, joined the youth at Pilgrimage in learning a new dance with song. He said he was there to be with the youth rather than being on the program. Most of the youth and adults did not know another important relationship he had to the day but when the announcement was made they all joined in singing Happy Birthday to Bishop Gwinn.



RIGHT: Parker Lee from Fuquay-Varina UMC read the scripture.



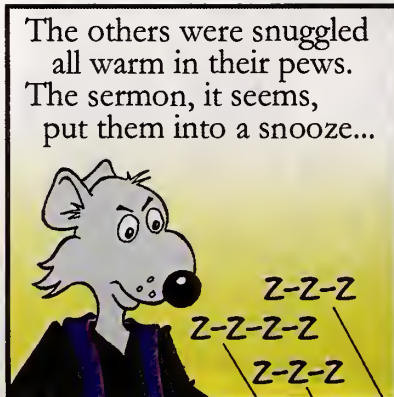
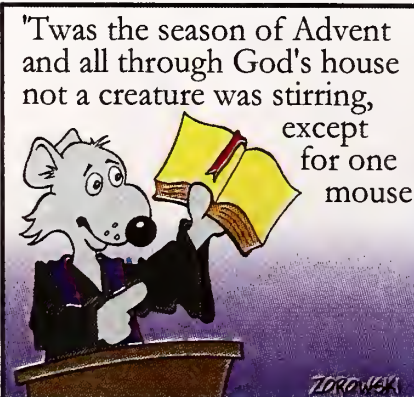
LEFT: Leigha Martinellae, from Front Street UMC in Burlington, offered a testimony during the gathering. The Pilgrimage Planning Team received written testimonies from youth and selected several for platform presentation during the Saturday program.

All photos by Bill Norton



ABOVE: Even after the end of a song or presentation, many of the 5,215 youth and adults in attendance continued to lift their arms in praise. Youth participated in Pilgrimage in a variety of ways including via social media. One statement made by speaker Lanecia Rouse was tweeted multiple times because of its power, "God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it!" After NCC Youth President Landis Barber issued a challenge, a participant tweeted with the comment: "If the only thing heard was what Landis just said, we count it a win. 'Don't go back and do nothing. Go home and spread the word.'"

Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

First annual retired clergy retreat held at Fort Caswell

By George E. Thompson *

With the initiative and administrative leadership of the Rev. Bill Cottingham, a retreat for retired clergy was held at Fort Caswell on Oak Island, Oct. 26-28.

Twelve pastors, four spouses, and 24 lay persons enjoyed the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Fear River setting for this gathering.

The purpose of this initial event was to provide fellowship, spiritual inspiration, and vibrant biblical instruction for retired clergy and their spouses.

Four sessions were devoted to presentations by Dr. Walter Harrelson, former dean of the divinity schools of Andover Newton, University of Chicago, and Vanderbilt University.

He offered insights into the lives and writings of the Hebrew prophets and stimulated much discussion and story-telling in application to parish experiences.

Dr. Harrelson selected some of the most challenging Psalms and provided theological interpretations to texts that are crucial to faith understanding.

Larry Maisel, an active layman at Trinity UMC (Southport) and president of the Southport Historical Society, gave a power-point lecture on the history of Fort Caswell and led a tour of nearby Southport.

At each congregational gathering, singing was led by musicians and pastors P. D. Midgett and Curtis Campbell.

One of the sessions included a time for sharing favorite jokes, some of which were considered by participants to be worthy of a Prairie Home Companion broadcast.

Before adjournment the group voted to make this an annual event and requested Bill Cottingham to provide organizational leadership for the next gathering, set for Sept. 26-28, 2012.

Retirees interested in participating in 2012 may send their suggestions and register their support for this activity by contacting Cottingham at bcottingham@ec.rr.com.

Dr. Belton Joyner will serve as the retreat leader in 2012.

* Dr. George E. Thompson is a retired clergy from the Western North Carolina Conference and lives in Waynesville. He was the scribe for the event.



Susan and Mark Hooker, the Rev. Linda Taylor, and sister and brother Samantha and Kevin Frink, of Oleander UMC, launch Jesus cross and card evangelism founded by the Rev. Taylor.

Wilmington District churches distribute thousands of pocket crosses, prayer cards

By Dick Brasie *

The Wilmington District lit the spiritual fires of its churches with scripture, song and the distribution of 11,000 pocket crosses for 67 churches with prayer cards witnessing for Christ in English and Spanish.

At the Ignite service at Grace United Methodist Church, District Superintendent Francis Daniel, preached:

"We are here to ignite the fires of life among the laity in new ways. We are sharing the message of the gospel to take into the world."

The small crosses with palm cards were distributed to the leadership of churches in the Wilmington District. The cards are headlined, "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors."

The People of the United Methodist Church"

The Rev. Linda Taylor, of Oleander United Methodist Church, originated the evangelical program and pocket crosses and cards, as a noninvasive way of presenting Methodism to strangers in restaurants, stores and other public places without a hard sell to people of "you must come to my church." The card guides strangers to www.wilmingtondistrictumc.net and the name and address of the nearest churches in New Hanover, Brunswick, Pender, Bladen and Columbus counties.

Soon after the crosses were distributed, Rev. Taylor told how a woman member of her congregation encountered a man on the street asking for money to buy food. "With a cross,

card and change in his hands," the Rev. Taylor said, "He began looking at the cross and card. Right there the hungry man had Jesus in his hand."

The host for the Ignite service, the Rev. Scott Dodson of Grace Church, said of the pocket cross evangelism, "our mission is to draw people to Jesus," enter Methodist churches and meet Jesus Christ and his followers in the congregation.

The Grace chancel choir, organ and piano duet and the hymns sung by the voices of the congregation brought the Holy Spirit to the Ignite service that renews the Methodist churches in the Wilmington District.

* Dick Brasie is communications coordinator in the Wilmington District.

Over 200 participated in UM Men's Duke Day event

Over 200 youth and adults participated in the 2011 United Methodist Men's Duke Day held Oct. 22 in the Duke Divinity School Chapel and at the Duke vs. Wake Forest football game.

The speaker was Rod Propes, a veteran vocalist with over 20 years of experience who shared his life experiences through testimony and song. There have been over 12,000 decisions for Christ following the beginning his music evangelism ministry in 2000.

The event was a community outreach of Conference UM Men

to encourage local UMM groups to sponsor youth participation, especially for youth in the community who do not have an opportunity, for fellowship, worship, having a meal together, and watching a Duke football game.

Propes began his program with singing, followed by a message interlaced with song, and concluded with a personal testimony and altar call.

A lunch of hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, apples, cookies and related items, which were prepared by the Aldersgate UMM, were available for

the participants.

"My group had a BLAST!!! The only way the day could have been better would have been if Duke had won the game," noted a participant survey after the event.

Other comments were also positive:

"The program was awesome and duration was not a problem with such a good and talented musician and speaker."

"Rod was an awesome speaker and his content was spot on; if my 14-year-old son liked him then he was definitely good."

Bishops vow to uphold same-sex union ban

By Heather Hahn*

While acknowledging the denomination's "deep disagreements" over homosexuality, the United Methodist Council of Bishops promised to uphold church law banning same-sex unions in a letter released Nov. 11 (See page 5).

"As bishops chosen, consecrated and assigned by the Church, we declare once again our commitment to be faithful to this covenant we have made," the letter said. "As the Council of Bishops we will uphold the *Book of Discipline* as established by General Conference."

The bishops' statement marked the first time the council as a body has addressed the pledges to bless same-sex unions signed this year by more than 1,000 United Methodist clergy across the United States.

In the New York Annual (regional) Conference, 732 lay people also have signed "a covenant of conscience" in support of such unions.

The pledges, in turn, sparked a countermovement by other United Methodist clergy and lay people urging the bishops to make clear that they will enforce the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's law book, on this issue.

So far, more than 2,500 clergy and 11,500 laity in the United States have signed petitions to the bishops at www.faithfulumc.com.

Altogether, the denomination has about 44,400 clergy and 7.8 million members in the United States. The United Methodist Church has more than 12 million members worldwide.

"I hope that the statement from the (Council of Bishops) will underscore for the church that we recognize the deep division within the church and the U.S. culture regarding homosexuality," said Minnesota Area Bishop Sally Dyck. "People are hurting on all sides of this issue and not



Bishop Sally Dyck

just in the church."

Dyck is the chair of the council's Unity Task Force, which drafted the letter that was later approved by the full council.

Also on the task force are Bishops Minerva Carcaño, Peter Weaver and Mike Lowry, as well as retired Bishops Joseph Pennel Jr. and Daniel Arichea.

Over the past three years, the group has met with the denomination's unofficial caucuses that represent varying views on homosexuality.

The letter from the bishops urges United Methodists to work together across the theological divide.

"As the church we're called to 'a more excellent way' of talking to and about each other, working through our differences, and loving one another in the midst of them," Dyck said, referencing 1 Corinthians 12:31.

What church law says

Since 1972, the topic of homosexuality has surfaced every four years at General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body. Delegates consistently have voted to keep the *Book of Discipline*'s language identifying homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching."

The *Book of Discipline* prohibits United Methodist churches from hosting and clergy from officiating at "ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions."

Under church law, performing such ceremonies is a chargeable offense. A church jury, called a trial court, can choose a range of penalties if there is a conviction including defrocking, suspension or a lesser penalty.

"To uphold the Discipline means that we will pursue the complaint process," Dyck said. "The desired outcome of the complaint process is always a just resolution, and only as a last resort would there be a church trial as the (*Book of Discipline*) clearly states."

The denomination's teachings on homosexuality go beyond prohibitions and potential penalties.

The letter from the bishops also cites the *Book of Discipline*'s Social Principles, which implores "families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends."

"We will continue to offer grace upon grace to all in the name of Christ," the letter said.

Dyck said the letter "clearly indicates that we will uphold the *Discipline* in regards to pastors who celebrate holy unions" and also calls upon the church to be "in ministry to all people." She noted, "The whole church lives in that tension."

Summer controversy

The pledges to bless same-sex unions started at the Minnesota Annual Conference session, where 70 clergy signed a statement saying they would "offer the grace of the Church's blessing to any prepared couple desiring Christian marriage," including same-sex couples.

Similar statements were subsequently signed by clergy in at least five other annual conferences,

including New England, New York, Northern Illinois, Oregon-Idaho and Tennessee.

Those pledging said their statements take a stand against discrimination and extend ministry to all. However, to those signing the Faithful UMC petitions, the statements flout church teaching and the clergy's ordination vows.

Even before the Council of Bishops released its statement, individual bishops — including Bishop Dyck and Chicago Area Bishop Hee-Soo Jung — publicly affirmed their commitment to enforce church law.

The cabinet of the Minnesota Annual (regional) Conference in June filed a formal complaint against a retired elder and is investigating whether he violated the denomination's ban against performing same-sex unions.

Throughout this year, the denomination's long-time debate over homosexuality has been heating up with the approach of the 2012 General Conference in Tampa, Fla.

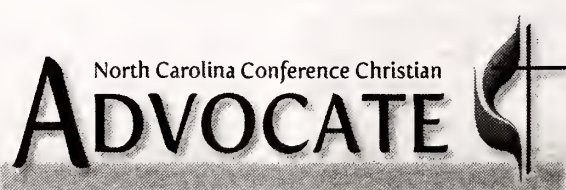
In June, the Rev. Amy DeLong in Wisconsin was convicted of performing a same-sex union and sentenced to a 20-day suspension as well as a yearlong process "to restore the broken clergy covenant relationship."

In February, 36 retired bishops called on the denomination to end its ban on the ordination of "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy.

"Even in the midst of our differences, we believe that we can together be about our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," the letter from the bishops said.

"We invite all United Methodists, lay and clergy, to join us in strengthening our congregations unto greater vitality for the sake of our mission."

* Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.



Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. Email submissions in MS Word format to bnorton@nccumc.org. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published. Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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COUNCIL OF BISHOPS THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

November 10, 2011

Dear United Methodist Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ who calls us to faithfulness during a time of great and unsettling change around the world that God loves so deeply and also within the Body of Christ where Jesus is both head and redeemer.

We give thanks for each one of you as you seek to be faithful witnesses and fruitful disciples wherever God has called you to live and share the grace that offers salvation to the world. Your faithfulness brings encouragement, inspiration and hope to us and to all who live in the influence of your witness.

In a time when the world seems to be torn apart with division, inequality, injustice, hatred and violence, as Christians we bear responsibility to give witness to "a more excellent way" (1Corinthians 12:31). The church is not exempt from struggles. We are not the first to experience upheaval in culture and church and we are not the first to have serious and deep disagreements about issues of great importance.

One of the deep disagreements and divisions within the church is over the practice of homosexuality, recently heightened by a group of clergy who have declared that they will perform holy unions in opposition to the *Book of Discipline*. This has caused different experiences of deep pain throughout the church. As the bishops of the church, we commit ourselves to be in prayer for the whole church and for the brokenness our communities experience. Furthermore, we "implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons" (par. 161F). We will continue to offer grace upon grace to all in the name of Christ.

At times like these we call upon each other to remember and renew our covenant with God and with one another as United Methodist Christians. As bishops chosen, consecrated and assigned by the Church, we declare once again our commitment to be faithful to this covenant we have made. As the Council of Bishops we will uphold the *Book of Discipline* as established by General Conference.

Even in the midst of our differences, we believe that we can together be about our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We invite all United Methodists, lay and clergy, to join us in strengthening our congregations unto greater vitality for the sake of our mission.

To that end, may we continue to live together in the spirit of Philippians 2:1-5:

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united and agreeing with each other. Don't do anything for selfish purposes but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 2:1-5).

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,
The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church

"As the Council of Bishops we will uphold the *Book of Discipline* as established by General Conference," says letter from the bishops.

The denomination's teachings on homosexuality go beyond prohibitions and potential penalties.

The letter from the bishops also cites the *Book of Discipline's* Social Principles, which implores "families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends."

"We will continue to offer grace upon grace to all in the name of Christ," the letter said.



AT ISSUE:

'Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.'

Paragraph 341.6

12 ways to help fight hunger

By Barbara Dunlap-Berg *

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society says that every minute 11 children who are 5 or younger die of hunger-related causes, and about 800 million people suffer from chronic or acute hunger.

Think this is a problem too big for one person to make a difference?

Not so.

Here are a dozen ways to begin making a difference today:

1. Go the second mile through The Advance. The Advance, an accountable, designated-giving arm of The United Methodist Church, ensures 100 percent of each gift reaches its intended mission or ministry. Working in 100 countries around the globe, Advance projects not only alleviate suffering and respond to disasters but also address the root causes of poverty and injustice, and make long-lasting improvements to the quality of life through development and education.
2. Buy a water buffalo...or a goat...or a flock of chicks through Heifer International. A charitable gift through Heifer International, a United Methodist partner, provides animals and training to help families around the world build a better future for themselves and their communities. Traditionally, recipient families give the first offspring of the animal they receive to another family in need, and the gift, quite literally, keeps on giving.
3. Make a group, housing or agriculture loan to an entrepreneur across the globe for as little as \$25. Kiva is a nonprofit organization with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate

poverty. Leveraging the Internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, Kiva lets individuals lend big or small amounts to help create opportunity around the world.

4. Participate in Stop Hunger Now, a United Methodist partner and international hunger-relief organization that coordinates food distribution and other lifesaving aid. More than 100,000 volunteers have packaged meals through Stop Hunger Now's meal-packaging program. These meal packages are shipped around the world to support school feeding programs and crisis relief. The food stores easily, transports quickly and has a shelf life of five years.
5. Urge Congress to end hunger through the Bread for the World letters campaign. The interfaith organization, another United Methodist partner, is a collective Christian voice encouraging U.S. decision-makers to end hunger globally. Bread for the World members write personal letters and emails and meet with members of the U.S. Congress. Working through churches, campuses and other agencies, Bread for the World involves more people in advocacy.
6. Walk to help others. CROP Hunger Walks sponsored by the United Methodist-supported Church World Service are popular hunger-fighting venues for people of all ages. Walkers of all ages collect pledges for each mile they walk. Today more than 2,000 communities across the United States join in more than 1,600 CROP Hunger Walks each year. More than 5 million people have



Preschoolers join volunteer efforts to pack sweet potatoes for the hungry during the Virginia Annual (regional) Conference sessions in Norfolk, Va. The children were volunteering with the Society of St. Andrew, a national hunger relief program affiliated with The United Methodist Church. (Photo courtesy of the Society of St. Andrew)

participated in more than 36,000 CROP Hunger Walks in the last two decades alone.

7. Become a "backpack buddy." Children who depend on free school breakfasts and lunches may go hungry at suppertime and on weekends. "Backpack buddies" programs provide children from food-insecure homes with weekend meals during the school year. Local churches and other groups collect and pack bags with child-friendly nonperishable food. In a typical backpack ministry, children receive a backpack containing six balanced meals and two healthy snacks every Friday.
8. Compete with other

congregations. Congregations in the Salt Lake City Valley, for example, sponsor the "Golden Celery" Award challenge every summer to benefit a community food pantry. The church with the most pounds of food per attendance at church donated for the month of July wins.

9. Contribute to — or start — a food pantry at your church. Don't know much about it? Get involved in community or state food banks to learn. Feeding America is a good resource. Its mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of

See "12 ways," page 7



College students learn that sharing resources is a solution to hunger during a hunger-awareness meal. The event was part of a Society of St. Andrew Harvest of Hope project in Jacksonville, Fla. About two dozen students from six Virginia colleges spent their spring break gleaning fruits and vegetables for area families in need. (Photo by Megan Gross, Society of St. Andrew)

Facts about hunger in the world

- Ministry with the Poor: This United Methodist campaign "provides resources for learning, mobilizing, connecting and engaging with ministries and people to eradicate poverty." <http://ministrywith.org>
- Board of Church and Society's Global Poverty and Hunger report: This United Methodist agency report explains the biblical and theological context for fighting hunger and tracks the reports of global initiatives in the fight against hunger. <http://umc-gbcs.org> and select "Global Poverty and Hunger" from the "Jump Start a Topic" drop-down.
- Bread for the World: This United Methodist partner describes itself as a "collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision-makers to end hunger at home and abroad." It has just issued its 2012 Hunger Report. <http://www.bread.org>
- Feeding America defines its mission as "to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger." Its website helps explain the scope of hunger in understandable ways such as its interactive Map the Meal Gap. <http://feedingamerica.org>
- Church World Service: This 60-year-old United Methodist-supported organization "is people reaching out to neighbors in need near and far — not with a hand out, but a hand up." Its website provides opportunities for involvement and news about projects around the world. <http://churchworldservice.org>

UMC continues fight against malaria with \$3 million grant from United Nations Foundation

The United Methodist Church will get a surge of support for its work to eliminate deaths and suffering from malaria in Africa, thanks to a \$3 million supplemental grant from the United Nations Foundation.

"The United Methodist Church brings a unique piece to solving the global puzzle of malaria and maternal and child health: Faith. It is who we are, where we come from and where we are going. It transcends challenges, political boundaries and even deadly diseases," said Bishop Thomas Bickerton, who chairs the United Methodist Global Health Initiative.

The grant will support administrative costs for the denomination's Imagine No Malaria campaign, an

effort to raise \$75 million to empower the entire African continent to achieve a sustainable victory over malaria through prevention, education, communication and treatment.

"We believe faith-based organizations play a critical role in fighting diseases like malaria," said Michael Pajonk, the UN Foundation's Director of Organizational Partnerships. "The United Methodist Church is a valued partner and we are proud to support the work of its Imagine No Malaria campaign."

The people of The United Methodist Church were founding partners of the UN Foundation's Nothing But Nets in 2006—a global, grassroots campaign to save lives by

United Methodists have helped Imagine No Malaria:

- Deliver more than 588,000 bed nets and educate recipients on their use
- Train 3,500 local health workers
- Create 15 in-country health boards
- Empower the people of Africa to fight malaria



sending insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria in Africa.

The United Methodist Church then expanded its commitment in 2008 when they joined the UN Foundation Malaria Partnership and with the creation of Imagine No Malaria.

They subsequently received a \$4.8 million grant to support Imagine No Malaria, a fundraising and educational campaign that launched on World Malaria Day 2010.

To date, The United Methodist Church has raised more than \$18 million to support the fight against malaria. These funds have already been utilized in Africa, providing more than 588,000 bed nets, establishing 15 in-country health boards to ensure greater accountability of donor funds and training more than 3,500 local health workers since April 2010.

The church's work drew recognition

from philanthropist Melinda Gates during the Malaria Forum sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in October 2011.

About Imagine No Malaria

Imagine No Malaria is a ministry of The people of The United Methodist Church focused on eliminating death and suffering from malaria in Africa by 2015.

With a goal of raising \$75 million to improve health infrastructure and empower a sustainable victory over the disease, Imagine No Malaria is our opportunity to rethink how congregations reach beyond their churches, opening doors to those who need it most.

For more information, visit www.ImagineNoMalaria.org.

12 ways to help fight hunger

continued from page 6

member food banks and engage people in the fight to end hunger.

10. Deliver Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels is the oldest and largest American organization made up of and representing community-based Senior Nutrition Programs in all 50 U.S. states and well as the U.S. territories.
11. Glean through the Society of St. Andrew. The ecumenical organization founded by United Methodists has three hunger-relief programs. The Gleaning Network and the Potato and Produce Project deliver donated leftover and unmarketable agricultural produce to people in need. The third — Harvest of Hope — informs people about the hunger problem and invites them to be part of the solution.
12. Show you care through the Souper Bowl of Caring. Mobilizing young people to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities, Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-led effort that encourages people to contribute one dollar each at worship services on Super Bowl Sunday. In 2011 across the United States, 15,238 groups generated \$9,583,338 in cash and food items for local charities.

* Barbara Dunlap-Berg is the internal content editor at United Methodist Communications.

MARRIAGE

Margaret Long (Raleigh: Longview) and Mac Sanford were married in a celebration of Christian Marriage at Longview UMC on Oct. 1.

DEATH

LEWIS, Martha (New Bern and Greenville Districts) died Oct. 26. A funeral service was held Oct. 29 at Pollocksville UMC.

North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to bnorton@nccumc.org. The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication.

All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest

Submitting Around the Conference Information

resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats. Items must be sent in separate files; photos cannot be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

January 1, 2012

Text: Genesis 39:7-21

"God Watches Over Joseph"

This week's study text tells about Joseph's getting thrown into prison. Note that the title of the lesson is "God Watches Over Joseph." If God is doing such a great job of watching over Joseph, how come our hero ends up in the clink?

The promise of God is not that we shall never have troubles. The promise of God is not that life will always unfold smoothly. The promise of God is not that we'll never be hit by injustice.

This account in Genesis certainly makes that clear: Joseph who is a trusted worker (Genesis 39:8) is unfairly tossed into prison. Joseph who is not willing to give into sexual temptation (Genesis 39:9) is put into jail. Joseph who is falsely accused ends up behind bars (Genesis 39:20).

Even so, the biblical revelation is that God is with Joseph (Genesis 39:21). I am reminded of a line in "Christmas Oratorio" by W. H. Auden. After the birth of Christ, the narrator says, "Now and forever we are not alone."

That's the key to Joseph's experience. Through thick and thin, through high and low, through freedom and prison, God is with Joseph.

Think of it: that means that God has to be in prison too! If Joseph is in prison and God is with Joseph, God is in prison too! Do you hear an

echo of Matthew's recall of Isaiah? "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel" (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14). Emmanuel! The word means "God is with us!" In Jesus Christ we have confirmation that God is with us!

It is interesting that in a portion of Genesis 39 that is not included in this week's lesson, we get a different presentation of God's watching over Joseph.

Look at Genesis 39:2: "The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man." That is the way we expect God to work. But our study ends with Joseph in prison and still the assurance that God is with him.

Whether life is going well (39:2) or not going easily (39:20-21), God is Joseph's companion. That is indeed good news because life's roller coaster surely goes both up and down. And God is with us.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *God Is Closer Than You Think* (Zondervan), John Ortberg has written: "Spiritual growth, in a sense, is simply increasing our capacity to experience the presence of God."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Open my eyes that I may see You with me, O God, even in those places that mark my failure, my disappointment, my loss. Lord Jesus, help me to know Your abiding walk with me as I take this journey..."

January 8, 2012

Text: Genesis 41:37-45, 50-52

"Joseph Finds Favor"

On reading this week's text, my first goal was to find out what "Zaphenath-paneah" means.

Can you imagine the fun one could have working that information into a conversation!

In Genesis 41:45, we have an account of Pharaoh's giving that Egyptian name to Joseph.

The first source I consulted said of

Zaphenath-paneah: "the meaning of which is debated."

Terence Fretheim says it means "God speaks and lives." Jason Tatlock notes "a consensus does not currently exist as to its meaning."

In Claus Westerman's three volume study of Genesis, the author does not risk a translation. So, we are left to wonder.

One reason I am curious about the name is because Pharaoh is heaping all kinds of honors and responsibilities on Joseph (Genesis 41: 40-44) and I pondered the possibility that this new name carries with it some easy way for others to recognize that Joseph had become someone to respect, even someone to obey. Not bad for a Hebrew former slave!

How important is it for us to have our good qualities recognized (Genesis 41:38)? How important is it for our authority to be identified (Genesis 41:43, 45)? How important is it that we remember our roots (Genesis 41:51)?

Joseph (or Zaphenath-paneah, if you prefer) wins two out of three.

He flunks the answer to the third question; he even names his first son "Manasseh," because Joseph says God has made Joseph forget his past, forget his own people, forget the time he was a nobody.

In next week's study, Joseph will once again claim his family, but for now he blissfully accepts his new role as Pharaoh's right-hand man and forgets who he, Joseph, really is.

Joseph does indeed find favor, but there is temptation in that favor. Do we Christians face the same temptation toward pride when we realize we have found favor with God?

Joseph does not wallow in the miseries of his long journey (Genesis 41:52), but that forgetfulness forms a fertile soil for the development of arrogance.

Be careful, Zaphenath-paneah.... whatever your name means! Forgetting can be a plus or a minus, depending, I suppose, on what we forget!

In this week's study, Joseph says God made him forget his hardships (41:51). Think about that kind of forgetting: is it good or bad?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Joan Chittister (*The Ten Commandments*, Orbis Books) wrote, "Sabbath says that we have forgotten who we are—that we are humans, that we are 'made in the image of

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

God'—so we have, of course, forgotten who the other is as well."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of my past, God of my present, God of my tomorrow..."

January 15, 2012

Text: Genesis 45:3-15

"God Preserves a Remnant"

It would be a good idea to keep the Kleenex handy as you read this week's lesson.

The familiar story of "the coat of many colors" (Genesis 37:23) has moved to the accounts of Joseph's being sold into slavery in Egypt (Genesis 37:36) and then on to the report of Joseph's great success emerging as a leader in Egypt (Genesis 41:40).

Next, a region-wide famine forces Joseph's brothers to come to Egypt to try to find food (Genesis 42:3). There are several exchanges as Joseph responds to the request of his brothers, all the while they do not recognize him (Genesis 42:7).

After secreting special gifts to his brothers (Genesis 43:23), Joseph finally breaks down (more ways than one!) and tells the brothers who he is (Genesis 45:1).

He sends them back to their father with plans for all of them to come and live under his care in Egypt (Genesis 47:1).

For me, the most poignant moment in this drama is in a verse not in this week's study text.

Joseph sends the brothers back to their father loaded down with gifts [wagons, new clothes, silver, grain, twenty donkeys packed with all kind of good things (Genesis 45:22-23)].

My thought is that Jacob, their father, would get wide-eyed and thrilled at seeing so much wealth being brought to him as a gift.

My thought is that Jacob would shout with joy that he no longer has to live in poverty.

Not so.

Jacob's first words are these: "My son Joseph is still alive!" (Genesis 45:28) Talk about having one's priorities in order!

When Joseph talks over all this with his brothers, he is clear: God has been in the midst of all this (Genesis 45:5, 8-9).

See "Bible Study" page 9

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January Adult Bible study

continued from page 8

The thread of God's presence has been weaving good news. It did not always look like good news, but God never let go of Joseph.

Even the horrid way his brothers had treated Joseph was turned into fountain of joy. Even the famine in Canaan was turned into reconciliation. Even the emptiness of Jacob's heart was filled with joy as learning that Joseph was yet alive.

Looking back from our perspective within Christian faith, we should not be surprised, because, after all, this is the God who turned crucifixion into resurrection, death into life.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Philip Jenkins closes his book *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis* (Oxford) with this statement: "Death and resurrection are not just fundamental doctrines of Christianity; they represent a historical model of the religion's structure and development."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "This day, O God, we are grateful for Your presence in the fullness of our journeys..."

January 22, 2012

Text: Genesis 50:15-26

"Joseph Transmits Abraham's Promise"

In the verses of this week's study text—the final portion of the Book of Genesis—the dramatic story of Joseph comes to an end.

Actually, it is picked up again in Exodus 13:19 when it is reported that the Hebrews carried Joseph's bones back from Egypt to Canaan and again in Joshua 24:32 when Joseph is buried in the family plot at Shechem.

More accurately then, we say that these verses complete the account of Joseph's life.

There is a tender moment noted in Genesis 50:17-21, when Joseph weeps and forgives his brothers for their treachery toward him and puts forth the claim that God was able to make something good out of something that started out as evil (50:20).

Joseph tells his brothers not to fear. (They had figured that even after twenty years he would want some kind of revenge.)

The Old Testament word for "fear" carries with it more than just being frightened. Joseph is saying more than "Don't be scared." It is the word that is often used when the biblical writer enjoins believers "to fear the Lord." We understand that kind of

fear is to be "reverence" and "respect."

When Joseph says to the brothers "Do not fear", he is saying "Do not reverence me...do not put me on a pedestal...do not kowtow to me." Joseph wants once again to be "one of the boys." He wants to be on even ground with his brothers.

It's a good model for those of us who live in privilege, richer than most of the world, beneficiary of the strongest nation on earth, and who have more than enough to eat.

We are invited by this text to recognize that the difficult neighbor is also created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

We are invited by this text to let go of any feelings of superiority over another race or ethnicity.

We are invited to say with Joseph, "Do not fear...do not reverence me...we are in this together as equals." Roles might vary but the equality of God's children is the common gift of God.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Patrick Allitt (*I'm the Teacher, You're the Student*, University of Pennsylvania Press) has noted: "Having grown up in America, it is was easy for (these students) to think that there is something natural about the idea of human equality. Actually, I tell them, it is very rare in the history of the world, and belief in human inequality has been far more normal almost always and almost everywhere."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy God, You who has loved all humankind into being, help us to walk on even ground with all of Your children. Forgive us when we expect others to fear us..."

January 29, 2012

Text: Exodus 15:1-3, 19, 22-26

"Out of Egypt"

In this week's study text, there are numerous side trips that can be taken from the main point that God delivers God's people from distress (Exodus 15:2, 19, 25-26). Let's make a few of those side trips.

Music: The story of God's deliverance of Israel is barely underway and already they are singing (15:1-3.) When we break into hymns of praise, repentance, and wonder, we are firmly in the tradition of a people who join Saint Augustine in saying, "The one who sings prays twice."

Women: In one of the verses bypassed in the study verses (Exodus 15:20), Moses' sister Miriam is

mentioned and described as a prophet. In that strongly patriarchal society, God's people were counter-cultural in giving women a place of power and respect. (Look also at Judges 4:4, Isaiah 8:3, 2 Kings 22:14, Nehemiah 6:14.)

Water: Biblical imagery often shows water as a gift that is needed for life (Exodus 15:22-25). Is it any wonder that in baptism we get wet with what is needed for life! In verse 25, God gives something (a stick of wood) that turns ordinary water into something good. In baptism, ordinary water from the faucet is turned into a means of God's grace.

Instructions: There are several dimensions to the instructions that God gives the Israelites in Exodus 15:26: listen, do, give heed, and keep. Most of the time I'm willing to listen; it's the doing and giving heed and keeping that causes me to miss the mark. It is in following (or not!) all of these instructions that we are put to the test (Exodus 15:25).

Unexpected: Dry land where there had been a sea was most unexpected (Exodus 15:19). It takes courage to

walk in a new place, particularly when that new place is not exactly how we had expected God to be with us!

Heritage: In the song sung by Moses and the Israelites, they refer to God as "my father's God" (Exodus 15:2). There is a power in connecting with those whom God has blessed before us. (These days we might call this "the communion of saints.") Claiming that inheritance of faith and being open to that continuing grace is a celebration of God's abiding presence.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In Jonathan Kirsch's biography of *Moses* (Moses, Ballantine Books), the author writes: "*Marah*, a Hebrew word that means 'bitterness,' is a byword of the life of Moses and the experience of the Israelites in the Exodus."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Into the bitter places, O God, bring the sweetness of Your presence..."

CLASSIFIEDS

LAKE JUNALUSKA - FOR SALE 3 BR/3 BA home+1 BR/1BA w/ private entrance across from George R. Stuart Auditorium. 3rd bedroom could become efficiency apt. Large open living-dining area w/ rock fireplace+breakfast area+hardwood floors. Enjoy lake view from screened porch off master bedroom. Contact Alice Mosteller, alice_mosteller@beverly-hanks.com. 800.849.8024

HOLDEN BEACH Ocean Front Condo - Pray, meditate and enjoy the beautiful view of the ocean from the covered porch of this two bedroom two bath condo (WiFi provided). Pastors and others in ministry receive a special off-season rate of \$425 per week (\$150 savings) from November through March. Contact Hobbs Realty (800) 655-3367 and refer to this ad to reserve "Our Beach Blessing" (Sea Oats Villas #106).

FOR SALE BY OWNER: 3,400 Square Foot Two Story, Brick Lake Front Home at Lake Junaluska Assembly. Four bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, 2 great rooms and fireplaces, new hardwood floors, 2 kitchens one recently installed. Use as 2 separate units or one large home. To view upstairs and exterior go to www.maggierevacations.com and click on Pops Porch. Contact Sherrill Sykes at hmsykes@atmc.net.

OCEAN FRONT CONDO for rent at Villa Dunescape, Atlantic Beach, NC. Top floor with skylight, elevator access, 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 4TVs, WiFi connection, screened porch overlooks pool and ocean. Off-season rates available. Contact Sally Dillon by e-mail jesbdillon@yahoo.com or by phone (919) 931-3295 (Raleigh, NC).

FOR RENT: Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska, 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

SURF CITY - new 3 bedroom townhouse, second row on Topsail Island. Special discounts for UMs! Contact us for weekly or weekend rates. Curtis & Lori Campbell. ccampbell@nccmc.org

EMERALD ISLE BEACH - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$895 per week, \$395 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com.

LAKE JUNALUSKA lakeview eff. apt. No steps! Sleeps 4, full kit. \$40 nite/\$250 wk. NP/NS. Call 828-456-5183.

PLACE YOUR AD TODAY - Call LeeAnne Thornton at 1-800-849-4433.

calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

Disciple Making Is NOT a Program registration ends Dec. 30

A training event for lay and clergy will be presented by Dr. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan Leadership for The General Board of Discipleship, at the UM Building in Garner on Jan. 13 and 14, 2012 from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm. Friday's one-day event will be repeated on Saturday. (Participants attend only one day.) This training opportunity will offer a look at small groups, a core element in the Wesleyan DNA and how John Wesley used the small group system for discipleship. It will also describe ways they can be utilized in today's church as a means of making and growing disciples. Visit <http://nccumc.org/christianformation/> to access the online registration form. A registration fee of \$15 includes lunch. Registrations must be completed by Dec. 30.

Summer camp 2012 registration now available

Summer Camp 2012 registration is now available for the NC Conference's three camps. Visit each camp's website for information about online registration.

Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center - www.campchestnutridge.org

Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center - www.donleecenter.org

Rockfish Camp & Retreat Center - www.camprockfish.org

Entries sought for MU Emerging Writers Contest, due by Jan. 2

Methodist University's 22nd annual Southern Writers Symposium announces its call for submissions to its Emerging Writers Contest. Symposium organizers seek submissions in fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction, especially as it relates to military topics. Each category's first- and second-place writers will receive cash awards of \$300 and \$200, respectively, and will read from their winning work at the March 17, 2012 Southern Writers Symposium on Methodist University's campus.

The contest is open to writers who meet at least two of the following criteria: 1) currently live in the South; 2) are a native of the South; and 3) write about

the South. Additionally, writers must have not yet published a full-length volume in the genre that they enter for the Emerging Writers Contest. All submissions are due Jan. 2, 2012, and a \$15 entry fee per submission

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Submitting Calendar Announcements

Please submit Calendar Announcements for possible use in the NC Conference's weekly News Briefs emails and in the NCCC Advocate by emailing communications@nccumc.org.

It is highly recommended that items be submitted a minimum of eight weeks before the event's registration deadline. Laity and clergy can also subscribe to News Briefs by emailing the address above.

is required. For more information about the 22nd annual Southern Writers Symposium and its Emerging Writers Contest, please go to www.methodist.edu/sws/index.htm or contact Brenda Jernigan, Director of Methodist University's Southern Writers Symposium at 910-630-7454 or bjernigan@methodist.edu.

Apply for Peace with Justice grants by Jan. 6

Jan. 6 is the deadline to apply for a Peace with Justice grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS).

Funding for this program is generated through the Peace with Justice Special Sunday offering of The United Methodist Church. One of six Special Sundays in the denomination, Peace with Justice "witnesses to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world." Peace with Justice Sunday is June 3 in 2012. This year \$50,000 was granted to 18 Peace with Justice ministries.

Grant applicants must be either a United Methodist or other affiliated organization, or an ecumenical group working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization. Preference is given to institutions related to The United Methodist Church, then to first-time requests and, finally, to those including an advocacy component in their program or project. Applicants must work toward achieving at least one of the following objectives:

- ✧ Assist United Methodists in understanding and responding to violence and militarism, and in moving and leading nations and peoples to reconciliation, transformation, and redemption.
- ✧ Involve and develop leaders among United Methodists and enjoin the general public in efforts to end conflicts, human rights violations and violent aggression around the world;
- ✧ Promote just national and international policies and actions (governmental and non-governmental) seeking to address poverty and restore communities; or
- ✧ Support policies that promote systematic economic justice and the self-development of peoples, in particular to respond to the disproportionate effect of injustices on racial, indigenous and ethnic persons.

Applicants may seek assistance in filling out the form, which is available on the GBGS Web site at <http://www.umc-gbcs.org>. Select "Leadership Development" and then "GBGS Grants." For more information, contact Mark Harrison, GBGS director of Peace with Justice at (202) 488-5645.

Summer internships for racial/ethnic minority young adults

Deadline to apply for a 2012 Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship in Washington, D.C., is Feb. 1. The program is for persons, ages 18-22, who have an interest in exploring issues of public policy, social justice advocacy and social change.

Sponsored by the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), the summer internship is for young adults representing the five ethnic minority caucuses of The United Methodist Church: Native Americans, Pacific-Islanders, Hispanic/Latinos, African Americans and Asian Americans. The program also seeks to attract United Methodist young adults from the Central Conferences of Africa, Philippines and Europe. Applicants must be full members in The United Methodist Church.

Interns will work in social justice placements in the U.S. capital June through July. They will participate in weekly devotions and topical seminars to supplement their daily work experience. Interns also will visit the United Nations office of GBGS in New York City. Participants are expected to return to their schools, churches and communities with an increased commitment to working with and on behalf of marginalized groups in society. Participants are also expected to share their experience with other persons from their community, school and church.

calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Summer internships" continued from page 8

The 2012 Ethnic Young Adult Internship application is available online at <http://www.umc-gbcs.org>. Select "Leadership Development" and then "GBCS Grants." For more information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie, assistant general secretary, Education & Leadership Formation, GBCS, 100 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002, (202) 488-5611.

Advanced online courses offered for Lay Speaking Ministries

The Institute for Discipleship is dedicated to providing educational opportunities that nurture and enrich Christian leaders, lay and clergy, for effective living and ministry. Several times a year, BeADisciple.com hosts online courses which have been approved by the General Board of Discipleship as an advanced course in Lay Speaking Ministries. These are designated by the GBOD logo "Learning and Leading." Learn more online at BeADisciple.com/layspeakingministries.html.

- ♦ Multimedia Technology in Worship for the Church Volunteer 101 – Jan. 2-13, 2012. Students will be introduced to the hardware and software in worship technology and discover their ability to plan, create and implement technology in a worship setting. The workshop will also help the student learn about worship itself and the role of technology in design, appropriateness and excellence.
- ♦ Leading Worship 101 for Lay Leaders – Jan. 9-Feb. 13, 2012. Leading Worship 101 will focus on basic worship leadership skills for lay persons ("liturgists" or "lay readers") who assist the pastor in leading Christian worship. If you currently help lead worship in your congregation or would like to prepare for such leadership, this course is for you.
- ♦ Biblical Storytelling I – January 16-30, 2012. This is a two-week introduction to the ancient-future art and spiritual discipline of telling the sacred stories of Scripture. Participants will learn to prepare, learn, and tell a Biblical text by heart (not "memory").
- ♦ Growing Spiritually through Daily Discipline – Jan. 17-March 2, 2012. Participants will be guided in discerning God's direction for their lives, practicing daily disciplines, and reaching out in love.
- ♦ Biblical Storytelling II – April 15 – May 7, 2012. This workshop expands on the methods taught in Biblical Storytelling I. It explores storytelling genres as well as telling the Biblical text, including midrash, chancel drama, first-person storytelling, and puppetry.



Anne Wilson, senior advisor in Global and Maternal Health, and Beatrice Gbanga, medical coordinator for the Sierra Leone conference.

Healthy Families, Healthy Planet workshop builds support

'Every 90 seconds a woman somewhere in the world dies giving birth, and almost all of these deaths are preventable.'

A group of close to 40 participants (nurses, midwives, international health experts, health advocates, and women who want to make a difference) joined together in Denver, Oct 13-15 for a training workshop on international women's, girls' and maternal health and international family planning advocacy.

The workshop was sponsored by a new program under the UM General Board of Church and Society, entitled Healthy Families, Healthy Planet which seeks to build a base of United Methodist support for increased U.S. funding for global maternal health and family planning programs.

Morning worship services were led by women working in the field, including Beatrice Gbanga, General Board of Global Ministries medical coordinator of the Sierra Leone conference, and committed men, such as Dr. Donald Messer, theology professor, executive director of the Center for the Church and Global AIDS, and chair of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund.

The speakers presented statistics on maternal and infant illness and deaths, the unmet need for family planning and basic healthcare, in addition to the spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly among women and girls.

Nearly half of all people living with HIV/AIDS are female and, among young people under age 24, females are over 75 percent of new cases.

Gbanga talked about her work in Sierra Leone, which has one of the highest maternal death rates in the world.

The training focused on what the church can do, starting with becoming informed about the issues and needs both locally in the U.S. and globally; finding ways to act (such as assembling clean birth kits to be sent to areas in need); contacting and meeting with church leaders and government legislators to keep a strong focus on women's and girls' health concerns; to advocating for funding for international family planning and maternal and child health programs in the U.S. federal budget.

The workshop was recorded on video and will be developed into a DVD for use with conferences and churches.

The video film will be accompanied by a leaders' guide that is being assembled and written by Eilene Bisgrove, a technical consultant for the training project and deacon in the NC Conference.

Bisgrove also developed fact and resource sheets for the workshop, which include background on a range of topics from adolescent health, HIV/AIDS, to family planning methods, United Methodist stand on the issues in from the Social Principles and Resolutions, Biblical texts for reflection, and words from John Wesley.

Learn more about *Healthy Families, Healthy Planet* online at www.umchealthyfamilies.org. Also, a short video on maternal mortality is available at - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llu6LTCmeK4>.

Anyone wanting copies of the fact sheets or to learn more about the workshop and upcoming film, contact Bisgrove at ebisgrove@nc.rr.com or Healthy Families, Healthy Planet coordinator Katey Zeh at kzeh@umc-gbcs.org.

conference CALENDAR

December

- 1 Registration for 2012 Summer Camp Opens
- 3 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- Local Church Treasurer and Finance Committee training, UM Building, Garner; 10 a.m.
- 10 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 12 CCT Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- 17 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 24 Rockfish Christmas at Camp
- 30 Written work for Provisional Membership and Commissioning Due
- 31 Rockfish Christmas at Camp

January

- 1 AGAPE Sunday
- 13 Disciple Making is NOT a Program, UM Bldg., 9:30 a.m.
- 14 Disciple Making is NOT a Program, UM Bldg., 9:30 a.m.
- 15 Human Relations Sunday
- 29-31 Provisional and Continuation Interviews

NCC events are available online at www.nccumc.org/calendar

around the CONFERENCE

Pee Dee UMC participates in Operation Christmas Child throughout the year

By Michael Griffin *

In November, Pee Dee UMC (Rockingham District) prepared shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. This tradition started in 2000 with each local church family purchasing and packing individual boxes.

The congregation brought the pre-packaged boxes to the church on a designated Sunday. From there the boxes were prayed over and loaded into a van to be delivered to Charlotte for distribution. This method has evolved over the years to enable the entire congregation to participate monthly throughout the year.

During the year, a list is printed

in the weekly bulletin with specific requests in order to accomplish the goal of toothpaste, toothbrush, socks, gloves and age- or gender-specific needs. In October, a punch list is circulated and purchases are made to bring this all together.

In November, a "soup" supper is held, and after the meal, the fellowship building transforms into a workshop. Rows of tables are transformed into workstations and covered with shoe boxes. Old and young alike begin chattering and giggling as they carry out the ministry of serving others beyond the church walls.

When the boxes are full, they are transferred into the sanctuary and placed on the altar. Conversations drop to a whisper as "awe" fills the faces of all as they see all the shoe boxes together. At that moment, everyone reflects on that special gift in their own lives and imagines the excited child who will "rip" open their own box.

This year Pee Dee UMC prepared 108 total boxes.

* Michael Griffin is pastor of Pee Dee UMC.



Completed shoeboxes are placed in the sanctuary and are prayed over before shipping.



Photos are of Pee Dee members packaging boxes or placing them in sanctuary for prayer before shipping.



109 persons from across the region participated in the Feed Your Neighbor 5K Run/Walk to benefit the Wendell UMC food pantry. Trip Lowery is the pastor at the church.

Wendell UMC sponsors 4th annual 5K to feed the hungry

On Oct. 16, Wendell UMC sponsored the 4th annual Feed Your Neighbor 5K Run/Walk to benefit the church's food pantry.

This year, 109 runners, including church members, the East Wake High School cross country team, and runners from other cities and towns, participated in this year's run/walk.

The WUMC food pantry provides service in the eastern Wake county area, particularly for the towns of Wendell and Zebulon.

An addition to this year's event was the collection of food items from homes along the race route.

A few days before the event, the church distributed grocery bags along the race route with a church

introduction piece and an invitation to make donations of items to the food pantry.

As runners weaved their way through the streets, brown grocery bags could be seen dotting the driveways. Following at the end of the runner line, church member, Scott Merritt, carefully lifted each bag into the back of his pickup truck.

"Because of the generous donations and support from the community, more than 95 percent of the money collected through sponsorships and registration fees for the race goes directly to the WUMC food pantry budget," according to Carol Gates, race coordinator.

This year's event raised \$5,000.

Sharon UMC is "The church that love built"

For Sharon UMC's October Homecoming, autumn wreaths were placed on each of the front sanctuary doors. Passing by the church on her night travels, Pastor

Renee Edwards noticed that outside lights of the church cast shadows on the front doors of the church in such a way that the shadow forms a heart. Edwards shared what she saw with the congregation, saying it was "The church that love built." Photo by church member Andy Blankenship.



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